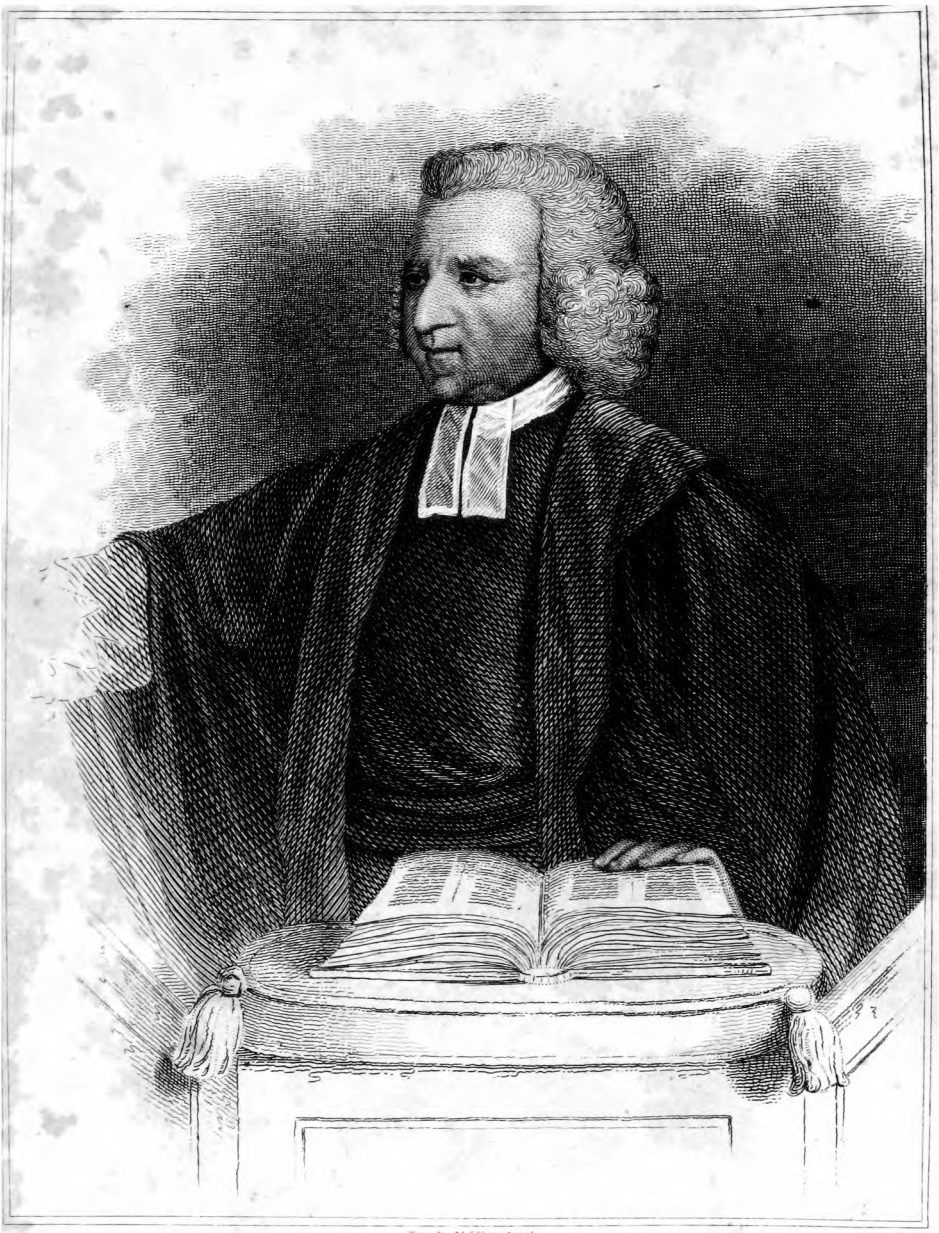


Engd by M.L.D antforth.

REV. CHARLES WESLEY, A.M.

Aged 76.

Published by N.Bangs, & J.Emory, New York.

THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD;

IN WHICH ARE INCLUDED,

THE LIFE OF HIS BROTHER,

THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY, A. M.

STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH;

AND MEMOIRS OF THEIR FAMILY:

COMPREHENDING AN ACCOUNT OF

The Great Revival of Religion,

IN WHICH THEY WERE THE FIRST AND CHIEF INSTRUMENTS.

BY THE REV. HENRY MOORE,

ONLY SURVIVING TRUSTEE OF MR. WESLEY'S MSS.

According to this time it shall be said, "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!"
NUMBERS xxiii, 23.

"*Not by might, nor by power, but by* MY SPIRIT," *saith the Lord of Hosts.*
ZECH. iv, 6.

Venturæque hiemis memores, æstate laborem
Experiuntur, et in medium quæsita reponunt.
VIRGILII GEORG.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE LIFE

OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS OF RELIGION, WITH THE PERSECUTIONS THAT FOLLOWED.

Mr. Wesley having now several helpers after his own heart the work of God prospered in many places. Many societies were formed in Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and in several parts of Yorkshire. And those in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, were much increased.

But as in the beginning of Christianity, so it was now: *This sect was every where spoken against.* But its enemies were not content with this. In the year 1740 several rioters, who had long disturbed the meetings in Bristol, were emboldened by impunity. Their numbers also increased, so as to fill not only the court before the preaching-house, but a considerable part of the street. The mayor sent them orders to disperse; but they set him at defiance. He then despatched several of his officers, who took the ringleaders into custody. The next day they were brought into court, it being the time of the quarter-sessions. There they received a severe reprimand; and from that time the society in Bristol enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace.

In London the rioters were not so easily subdued. They assembled at various places, and frequently treated Mr. Wesley and many of his serious hearers in a shameful manner. They followed them with showers of stones, and once attempted to unroof the Foundery, where the congregation was assembled, and had nearly accomplished their design. The common cry

was, "You may treat them as you please, for there is no law for them." But Sir John Ganson, the chairman of the Middlesex justices, called on Mr. Wesley and informed him "that he had no need to suffer these riotous mobs to molest him;" adding, "Sir, I and the other Middlesex magistrates have *orders from above* to do you justice whenever you apply to us." A short time after he did apply. Justice was done, though not with rigour; and from that period the society had peace in London. It was very confidently stated, in that day, that when the question concerning the persecutions suffered by the societies at this time, came before the council, the king declared that "No man in his dominions should be persecuted on the account of religion while he sat on the throne." His late majesty also, and indeed all that dynasty, have acted on the same principle.

A remarkable circumstance, which Mr. Wesley related to me, may throw considerable light on those "orders from above." One of the original society of Methodists at Oxford, on the departure of its founders from the university, after seeking for others like-minded, at length joined the society of Quakers and settled at Kew. Being a man of considerable property, and of exemplary behaviour, he was much respected and favoured with free permission to walk in the royal gardens. Here he frequently met the king, who conversed freely with him, and with much apparent satisfaction. Upon one of those occasions his majesty, knowing that he had been at Oxford, inquired if he knew the Messrs. Wesley, adding, "They make a great noise in the nation." The gentlemen replied, "I know them well, King George; and thou mayest be assured that thou hast not two better men in thy dominions, nor men that love thee better, than John and Charles Wesley." He then proceeded to give some account of their principles and conduct; with which the king seemed much pleased.—When Mr. Wesley had concluded I said, "We see, sir, the Lord can bring a tale to the ear of the king."—He replied, with much feeling, "O, I have always found the blessedness of a *single eye*,— of leaving all to Him."

However, the rioters in the country, particularly in Staffordshire, were not so easily quelled. In the beginning of 1743 Mr. Wesley visited Wednesbury, and preached in the town-hall

morning and evening, and also in the open air. He likewise visited the parts adjacent, and more especially those which were inhabited by colliers. Many appeared to be deeply affected, and about a hundred desired to join together. In two or three months these were increased to between three and four hundred, and upon the whole enjoyed much peace. But in the summer following there was an entire change. Mr. Egginton, the minister of Wednesbury, with several neighbouring justices of the peace, stirred up the basest of the people; on which such outrages followed as were a scandal to the Christian name. Riotous mobs were summoned together by the sound of a horn; men, women, and children, were abused in the most shocking manner; being beaten, stoned, covered with mud: some, even pregnant women, were treated in a manner that cannot be mentioned. In the mean time their houses were broken open by any that pleased, and their goods spoiled or carried away; some of the owners standing by, but not daring to oppose, as it would have been at the peril of their lives. Mr. Wesley's own account of those riots, as far as they related to himself, is so remarkable, that I make no scruple of inserting it at large.

"Thursday, October 20, 1743.—After preaching at Birmingham I rode to Wednesbury. At twelve I preached in a ground near the middle of the town, to a far larger congregation than was expected, on, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' I believe every one present felt the power of God, and no creature offered to molest us.

"I was writing at Francis Ward's in the afternoon, when the cry arose that 'the mob had beset the house.' We prayed that God would disperse them. And it was so; so that in half an hour not a man was left. I told our brethren, 'Now is the time for us to go;' but they pressed me exceedingly to stay. So, that I might not offend them, I sat down, though I foresaw what would follow. Before five the mob surrounded the house again in greater numbers than ever. The cry of one and all was, 'Bring out the minister; we *will* have the minister.' I desired one to take their captain by the hand and bring him into the house. After a few sentences interchanged between us the lion was become a lamb. I desired him to go and bring one or two of the most angry of his companions. He brought in two, who were ready to swallow the ground with rage: but

in two minutes they were as calm as he. I then bade them make way, that I might go out among the people. As soon as I was in the midst of them I called for a chair, and standing up, asked, 'What do any of you want with me?' Some said, 'We want you to go with us to the justice.' I replied, 'That I will with all my heart!' I then spoke a few words, which God applied; so that they cried out with might and main, 'The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defence!' I asked, 'Shall we go to the justice to-night, or in the morning?' Most of them cried, 'To-night! To-night!' On which I went before, and two or three hundred followed.

"The night came before we had walked a mile together with heavy rain. However, on we went to Bentley-Hall, two miles from Wednesbury. One or two ran before to tell Mr. Lane, 'They had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship.'—Mr. Lane replied, 'What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Go and carry him back again.' By this time the main body came up and began knocking at the door. A servant told them, 'Mr. Lane was in bed.'—His son followed and asked, 'What was the matter?'—One replied, 'Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day; nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning. And what would your worship advise us to do?'—'To go home,' said Mr. Lane, 'and be quiet.'

"Here they were at a full stop till one advised, 'To go to justice Persehouse at Walsal.'—All agreed to this. So we hastened on and about seven came to his house. But Mr. Persehouse likewise sent word that 'he was in bed.'—Now they were at a stand again; but at last they all thought it the wisest course to make the best of their way home. About fifty of them undertook to convoy me. But we had not gone a hundred yards, when the mob of Walsal came, pouring in like a flood, and bore down all before them. The Darlaston mob made what defence they could; but they were weary, as well as outnumbered. So that in a short time many being knocked down, the rest ran away and left me in their hands.

"To attempt speaking was vain; for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea. So they dragged me along till we came to the town; where seeing the door of a large house open I attempted to go in; but a man, catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no

more stop till they had carried me through the main street. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open I made toward it and would have gone in; but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying, 'They would pull the house down to the ground.'—However, I stood at the door, and asked, 'Are you willing to hear me speak?'—Many cried out, 'No, no! Knock his brains out! Down with him! Kill him at once!' Others said, 'Nay; but we will hear him first!'—I began asking, 'What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?' and continued speaking above a quarter of an hour, till my voice suddenly failed. Then the floods began to lift up their voice again; many crying out, 'Bring him away! Bring him away!'

"In the mean time my strength and my voice returned, and I broke out aloud into prayer. And now the man who just before headed the mob turned and said, 'Sir, I will spend my life for you. Follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.'—Two or three of his fellows confirmed his words and got close to me immediately. At the same time the gentleman in the shop cried out, 'For shame! For shame! Let him go!'—An honest butcher who was a little farther off said, 'It was a shame they should do thus;' and pulled back four or five, one after another, who were running on the most fiercely. The people then, as if it had been by common consent, fell back to the right and left; while those three or four men took me between them and carried me through them all. But on the bridge the mob rallied again; we therefore went on one side, over the mill-dam, and thence through the meadows, till, a little before ten, God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat and a little skin from one of my hands.

"I never saw such a chain of providences before; so many convincing proofs that the hand of God is on every person and thing, overruling as it seemeth him good.

"A poor woman of Darlaston, who had headed that mob, and sworn that 'none should touch me,' when she saw her fellows give way, ran into the thickest of the throng and knocked down three or four men one after another. But many assaulting her at once she was soon overpowered, and had pro-

bably been killed in a few minutes, (three men keeping her down and beating her with all their might,) had not a man called out to them, 'Hold, Tom, hold!'—'Who is there?' said Tom. 'What, honest Munchin? Nay then, let her go!'—So they held their hands and let her get up and crawl home as well as she could.

"From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind, that if they should throw me into the river it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat, and a light pair of boots.

"By how gentle degrees does God prepare us for his will! Two years ago a piece of a brick grazed my shoulders. It was a year after that a stone struck me between the eyes. Last month, I received one blow; and this evening, two,—one before we came into the town and one after we were gone out. But both were as nothing: for, though one man struck me on the breast with all his might, and the other on the mouth with such a force that the blood gushed out immediately, I felt no more pain from either of the blows than if they had touched me with a straw.

"It ought not to be forgotten, that when the rest of the society made all haste to escape for their lives four only would not stir, William Sitch, Edward Slater, John Griffiths, and Joan Parks: these kept with me, resolving to live or die together. And none of them received one blow but William Sitch, who held me by the arm from one end of the town to the other. He was then dragged away and knocked down; but he soon rose and got to me again. I afterward asked him 'What he expected when the mob came upon us?'—He said, 'To die for Him who had died for us;' and added, that 'he felt no hurry or fear, but calmly waited till God should require his soul of him.'

"When I came back to Francis Ward's I found many of our brethren waiting upon God. Many also whom I never had seen before came to rejoice with us. And the next morning, as I rode through the town on my way to Nottingham, every one I met expressed such a cordial affection, that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard."

About this time (1744) a Captain Turner, of Bristol, a member of the Methodist society, landed at St. Ives in Cornwall, and was agreeably surprised to find a few persons who feared God and constantly met together. They were much refreshed by him, as he was by them. On mentioning this at Bristol, Mr. Charles Wesley went there with two of the preachers, whose labours were blessed to many. Mr. John Wesley soon after visited them and found a considerable society, many of whom enjoyed peace with God. But both he and his serious hearers were roughly handled by the rector, the curate, and the gentry, who set the mob upon them on every occasion. Many of the people were wounded; and the preaching-house at St. Ives was pulled down to the ground.

The persecution Mr. Wesley met with in Falmouth and its neighbourhood is so remarkable, that I shall give his own description of it; and this, with the account of the persecution at Wednesbury, will afford my readers some idea of the sufferings Mr. Wesley endured in the commencement of his extensive labours.

"Thursday, July 4.—I rode to Falmouth. About three in the afternoon I went to see a gentlewoman who had been indisposed. Almost as soon as I sat down the house was beset on all sides by an innumerable multitude of people. A louder or more confused noise could hardly be at the taking of a city by storm. At first Mrs. B. and her daughter endeavoured to quiet them: but it was labour lost. They might as well have attempted to still the raging of the sea, and were therefore soon glad to shift for themselves. The rabble roared with all their throats, 'Bring out the *Canorum!* Where is the *Canorum?*' (an unmeaning word which the Cornish rabble then used instead of *Methodist.*) No answer being given, they quickly forced open the outer door and filled the passage. Only a wainscot partition was between us, which was not likely to stand long. I immediately took down a large looking-glass which hung against it, supposing the whole side would fall in at once. They began their work with abundance of bitter imprecations. A poor girl who was left in the house was utterly astonished, and cried out, 'O sir, what must we do?'—I said, 'We must pray.'—Indeed at that time, to all appearance, our lives were not worth an hour's purchase.—She asked, 'But.

sir, is it not better for you to hide yourself? To get into the closet?'—I answered, 'No. It is best for me to stand just where I am.' Among those without were the crews of some privateers, which were lately come into the harbour. Some of these being angry at the slowness of the rest thrust them away, and coming up all together, set their shoulders to the inner door, and cried out, 'Avast, lads, avast!' Away went all the hinges at once and the door fell back into the room. I stepped forward into the midst of them and said, 'Here I am! Which of you has any thing to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? Or you? Or you?' I continued speaking till I came into the middle of the street, and then raising my voice said, 'Neighbours, countrymen! Do you desire to hear me speak?' They cried vehemently, 'Yes, yes! He shall speak. He shall. Nobody shall hinder him.' But having nothing to stand on, and no advantage of ground, I could be heard by a few only. However, I spoke without intermission; and as far as the sound reached the people were still, till one or two of their captains turned about and swore, "Not a man shall touch him.' Mr. Thomas, a clergyman, then came up and asked, 'Are you not ashamed to use a stranger thus?' He was soon seconded by two or three gentlemen of the town and one of the aldermen, with whom I walked down the town, speaking all the time till I came to Mrs. Maddern's house. The gentlemen proposed sending for my horse to the door, and desired me to step in and rest the mean time. But on second thoughts they judged it not advisable to let me go out among the people again. So they chose to send my horse before me to Penryn, and to send me thither by water; the sea running close by the back door of the house in which we were.

"I never saw before, no, not at Walsal itself, the hand of God so plainly shown as here. *There* I had some companions, who were willing to die with me; *here*, not a friend but one simple girl; who likewise was hurried away from me in an instant as soon as ever she came out of Mrs. B.'s house. *There* I received some blows, lost part of my clothes, and was covered over with dirt. *Here*, although the hands of perhaps some hundreds of people were lifted up to strike or throw, they were one and all stopped in the midway, so that not a man touched me with one of his fingers. Neither was any thing thrown from first to last,

so that I had not even a speck of dirt on my clothes. Who can deny that God heareth the prayer? or that he hath all power in heaven and earth?"

In September, 1744, Mr. Wesley received the following letter from Mr. Henry Millard, one of the preachers in Cornwall, giving some account of their difficulties. "The word of God," says he, "has free course here: it runs and is glorified. But the devil rages horribly. Even at St. Ives, we cannot shut the door of John Nance's house to meet the society but the mob immediately threatens to break it open. And in other places it is worse. I was going to Crowan on Tuesday, and within a quarter of a mile of the place where I was to preach some met me and begged me not to go up, saying, 'If you do there will surely be murder, if there is not already; for many were knocked down before we came away.' By their advice I turned back to the house where I had left my horse. We had been there but a short time when many people came in very bloody. But the main cry of the mob was, 'Where is the preacher?' whom they sought for in every part of the house; swearing bitterly, 'If we can but knock him on the head we shall be satisfied.'

"Not finding me, they said, 'However, we shall catch him on Sunday at Cambourn.' But it was Mr. Westall's* turn to be there. While he was preaching at Mr. Harris's a tall man came in and pulled him down. Mr. Harris demanded his warrant; but he swore, 'Warrant or no warrant, he shall go with me!' So he carried him out to the mob, who took him away to the church town. They kept him there till the Tuesday morning, when the Rev. Dr. Borlase wrote his *mittimus*, by virtue of which he was to be committed to the house of correction at Bodmin as a vagrant. So they took him as far as Cambourn that night, and the next day to Bodmin."

The justices who met at the next quarter-sessions in Bodmin, knowing a little more of the laws of God and man, or at least showing more regard for them than Dr. Borlase, declared Mr. Westall's commitment to be contrary to all law, and immediately set him at liberty.

* Thomas Westall was a simple, upright man, whose word the Lord greatly blessed Mr. Wesley at first thought, as in the case of Thomas Maxfield, to silence him. But Mrs. Canning, a pious old lady of Evesham, said, "Stop him at your peril! He preaches the truth, and the Lord owns him as truly as he does you or your brother."

The preachers in the different parts of the kingdom were permitted to 'drink of the same cup,' yea, in many instances they suffered greater persecutions than Mr. Wesley himself. Stones, dirt, and rotten eggs, were the common weapons of the mob. In some instances, as in that of Mr. Thomas Mitchell,* they were thrown into ponds of water and held down till they were nearly drowned. Applications were made for redress to the neighbouring magistrates, but generally in vain. They then, under the patronage of Mr. Wesley, had recourse to the court of king's bench, and, in every instance, found the most ample justice. The judges of that court acted on every occasion with the greatest uprightness and impartiality; the consequence of which was, that in many places peace was restored.

Notwithstanding this brutal opposition, Mr. Wesley preached in most of the towns in Cornwall: and the seed sown, through the blessing of God, produced a plentiful harvest. Perhaps there is no part of these kingdoms where there has been a more general change. *Hurling*, their favourite but a most brutal diversion, at which limbs were frequently broken and lives lost, is now hardly heard of: and that scandal of humanity which had been so constantly practised on all the coasts of Cornwall, *the plundering vessels that struck upon the rocks, and often murdering those that escaped from the wreck*, is now well nigh at an end. But it is not harmlessness or outward decency alone which has evidenced the reality of their religion, but *faith working by love*, producing all inward and outward holiness.

About the time of the persecutions in Cornwall, John Nelson of Birstal in Yorkshire, who has been mentioned before, and Thomas Beard, an honest industrious man, were pressed and sent off as soldiers, for no other crime, either committed or pretended, than that of calling sinners to repentance. John Nelson was, after much ill usage, released by an order from the secretary at war, and preached the gospel many years. But

* A plain, forcible preacher, greatly owned of God, especially to the poor. The late Dr. Hey, of Leeds, used to call upon Dr. Priestly, who then also lived at Leeds, and take him to the Methodist chapel. On one of those occasions the preacher happened to be Mr. Mitchell. Dr. Hey, who was rather nice in hearing, was mortified that his philosophical friend should be led to hear so plain a preacher. On their return, however, he ventured to ask the doctor what he thought of the sermon. He replied, "that he thought it admirable!" But perceiving his friend's surprise he added, "Other men *may* do good, Dr. Hey, but that man *must* do good, for he aims at nothing else."

Thomas Beard sunk under his oppressions. He was then lodged at the hospital at Newcastle, where he praised God continually. His fever increasing he was bled. His arm festered, mortified, and was cut off: two or three days after which, God signed his discharge and called him up to his eternal home.

While Mr. Wesley thus, like his Divine Master, 'endured the cross, despising the shame,' his brother Mr. C. Wesley was called to drink of the same cup. He had laboured in the preceding year in the neighbourhood of Bristol till the 17th of May, when he set out for the north. He preached at Painswick, and then visited Stroud, Evesham, and several other places; and on the 20th, he observes, "I got once more to our dear colliers at Wednesbury. Here the seed has taken root, and many are added to the church. A society of more than three hundred are seeking full redemption in the cleansing blood of Christ. The enemy rages exceedingly against them. A few here have returned railing for railing; but the generality have behaved as the followers of Christ Jesus.

"May 21. I spent the morning in conference with several who 'have received the atonement' under my brother's ministry. I saw the piece of ground to build a chapel upon, given us by a Dissenter. I walked with many of our brethren to Walsal, singing as we went. We were received with the old complaint, 'Behold these that turn the world upside down are come hither also!' We walked through the town amidst the noisy greetings of our enemies. I stood on the steps of the market-house. A host of men came against us; and they lifted up their voice and raged horribly. I preached from these words, 'But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy,' &c. The street was full of fierce Ephesian beasts, (the principal man setting them on,) who roared, and shouted, and threw stones incessantly. At the conclusion, a stream of ruffians was suffered to beat me down from the steps; I rose, and, having given the blessing, was beat down again, and so a third time. When we had returned thanks to the God of our salvation, I then from the steps bid them depart in peace, and walked through the thickest of the rioters. They reviled us, but had no commission to touch a hair of our head.

"May 22. I preached to between one and two thousand peaceable people at Birmingham, and again at Wednesbury in the evening. On the 23d I took my leave in those words, 'Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven.' With many tears and blessings they sent me away, recommended to the grace of God.

"May 26th. In the afternoon I came to the flock in Sheffield, who are as sheep among wolves; the minister having so stirred up the people that they are ready to tear the Methodists in pieces. At six o'clock I went to the society house, next door to our brother Bennet's. Hell from beneath seemed moved to oppose us. As soon as I was in the desk with David Taylor the floods began to lift up their voice. An officer in the army contradicted and blasphemed. I took no notice of him, but sang on. The stones flew thick, striking the desk and the people. To save them, and the house from being pulled down, I gave out that I should preach in the street and look them in the face. The whole army of the aliens followed me. The captain laid hold on me and began rioting: I gave him *A word in season, or advice to a soldier*. I then prayed, particularly for his majesty king George, and preached the gospel, although with much contention. The stones often struck me in the face. I prayed for sinners, as servants of their master, the devil; upon which the captain ran at me with great fury, threatening revenge for abusing, as he called it, 'the king his master.' He forced his way through the brethren, drew his sword, and presented it to my breast. I immediately opened my breast, and fixing my eye on his, and smiling in his face, calmly said, 'I fear God and honour the king.' His countenance fell in a moment, he fetched a deep sigh, and putting up his sword, quietly left the place. He had said to one of the company, who afterward informed me, 'You shall see if I do but hold my sword to his breast he will faint away.' So perhaps I should, had I only his principles to trust to; but if at that time I was not afraid, no thanks to my natural courage. We returned to our brother Bennet's, and gave ourselves up to prayer. The rioters followed, and exceeded in outrage all I have seen before. Those at Moorfields,

Cardiff, and Walsal, were lambs to these. As there is no king in Israel, I mean no magistrate in Sheffield, every man doth as seemeth good in his own eyes."

The mob now formed the design of pulling down the society house, and set upon their work while Mr. C. Wesley and the people were praying and praising God within. "It was a glorious time," says he, "with us: every word of exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was sealed, and many found *the spirit of glory resting upon them.*"*—The next day the house was completely pulled down, not one stone being left upon another: "nevertheless," said Mr. Wesley to a friend, "'the foundation standeth sure;' and 'our house, not made with hands, is eternal in the heavens.'"—This day he preached again in the street, somewhat more quietly than before. In the evening the rioters became very noisy again, and threatened to pull down the house where Mr. C. Wesley lodged. He went out to them; read the riot act, and made a suitable exhortation. They soon afterward separated, and peace was restored.

May 27. At five in the morning he took leave of the society in these words, 'Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' He observes, "Our hearts were knit together, and greatly comforted: we rejoiced in hope of 'the glorious appearing of the great God,' who had now delivered us out of the mouth of the lions. David Taylor informed me that the people of Thorpe, through which we should pass, were exceedingly mad against us. So we found them as we approached the place and were turning down the lane to Barley-Hall. The ambush rose and assaulted us with stones, eggs, and dirt. My horse flew from side to side till he found his way through them. They wounded D. Taylor in the forehead, and the wound bled much. I turned back and asked, What was the reason why a clergyman could not pass without such treatment? At first the rioters scattered, but, their captain rallying them, answered with horrible imprecations and stones. My horse took fright, and turned away with me down a steep hill. The enemy pursued me from afar, and followed shouting. Blessed be God I received no hurt, only from the

* 1 Peter iv, 24.

eggs and dirt. My clothes indeed abhorred me, and my arm pained me a little from a blow I received at Sheffield."

Notwithstanding this he spent an hour or two with some quiet sincere persons assembled at Barley-Hall. By four o'clock in the afternoon he reached Birstal, a land of rest: here they had peace in all their borders. Great multitudes were bowed down by the victorious power of gospel truth. "It was," says Mr. C. Wesley, "a time much to be remembered for the gracious rain wherewith our God refreshed us."—The next day he preached again, in the morning and at noon, to this childlike people, and again in the afternoon at Ormsby in his way to Leeds.

May 29, he informs us in his journal, that, not a year before, he had come to Leeds and found no man who cared for the things of God: "but," he observes, "a spark has now fallen in this place also, and it will kindle a great flame.* I met the infant society, about fifty in number, most of them justified, and exhorted them to walk circumspectly. At seven o'clock I stood before Mr. Shent's door and cried to thousands, 'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!' The word took place. They gave diligent heed to it, and seemed a people prepared for the Lord. I went to the great church, and was showed to the minister's pew. Five clergymen were there, who a little confounded me by making me take place of my elders and betters. They obliged me to help in administering the sacrament. I assisted with eight more ministers, for whom my soul was much drawn out in prayer. But I dreaded their favour more than the stones at Sheffield."—He was afraid he should melt in this sunshine.

At two o'clock he found a vast multitude waiting for the word, and strongly exhorted them to repent and believe the gospel that their sins might be blotted out. He preached again at Birstal, calling upon "the poor and maimed, the halt and blind,"

* Of the spark which had thus fallen I am happy to be able to relate the history. The venerable Christopher Hopper, after many years of arduous labour, was preaching at Leeds a few years after the death of Mr. Wesley. The conference was then assembled at that place. The chapels were full, and several preachers were preaching abroad at the same time. He observed, "Just fifty years ago I opened my commission in a barber's shop in this town—the shop of William Shent. I had just as many hearers as the shop would contain. There the Lord sowed 'the grain of mustard seed!' Behold what it has come to!" Great was our rejoicing in the Lord!

to come to the great supper. He observes, "My Lord disposed many hearts, I doubt not, to accept the invitation. There were several witnesses of the truth, which they have now received in the love of it. I had a blessed parting with the society.

"May 30. My horse threw me and fell upon me. My companion thought I had broken my neck; but my leg only was bruised, my hand sprained, and my head stunned, which spoiled me from *making hymns*,* or thinking at all in that way till the next day, when the Lord brought us safe to Newcastle. At seven o'clock I went to the room, which will contain about two thousand persons. We rejoiced for the consolation of our mutual faith.

"June 5. My soul was revived by the poor people at Chowden; and yet more at Tanfield, where I called to great numbers, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' &c. At Newcastle I preached in the crowded square, chiefly to the backsliders, whom I besought with tears to be reconciled to God. Surely Jesus looked upon some of them as he looked upon Peter.

"June 6. I had the great comfort of recovering some of those who have drawn back. I trust we shall recover them again for ever. On the 8th I spake to the bands separately and tried their faith. We certainly have been too easy in allowing persons for believers on their own testimony: nay, and even persuading them into a false opinion of themselves. Some souls it is doubtless necessary to encourage; but it should be done with caution. To tell one in darkness that he has faith is to keep him in darkness still, or to make him trust in a false light; a faith that stands in the words of men, not in the power of God.

"June 16. I set out for Sunderland with strong aversion to preaching. I dragged myself to about a thousand wild people, and cried, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help!' Never have I seen greater attention in any people at their first hearing the word. We rode to Shields, went to church, and the people flocked in crowds after me. The minister spake so low that he could not be heard in reading prayers; but I heard him loud enough afterward, calling to the church-wardens to quiet the disturbance, which none but himself had raised. I fancy he thought I should preach in the

* He composed his finest hymns while engaged in those labours, and often on horseback; of that I shall say more hereafter.

church where I stood, like some of the first Quakers. The clerk came to me, bawling out, 'It was consecrated ground, and I had no business to preach on it: that I was no minister,' &c. When he had cried himself out of breath, I whispered in his ear, that I had no intention to preach there. He stumbled however on a good saying, "If you have any word of exhortation to the people, speak to them without.' I did so, to a huge multitude waiting in the churchyard: many of them very fierce, threatening to drown me, and what not! I walked through the midst of them, and discoursed in strong awakening words on the jailer's question, 'What must I do to be saved?' The church-wardens and others laboured in vain to interrupt me, by throwing dirt, and even money, among the people. Having delivered my message I rode to the ferry, crossed it, and met as rough friends on the other side. The mob of North Shields waited to salute me, with the minister at their head. He had got a man with a horn instead of a trumpet, and bid him blow and his companions shout. Others were almost as violent in their approbation. We went through honour and dishonour; but neither of them hurt us, and by six o'clock, with God's blessing, we came safe to Newcastle."

June 19. Mr. C. Wesley took leave of the society at Newcastle, and on June 24 he arrived at Nottingham; and adds, "I found my brother in the market-place,* calling lost sinners to 'him who justifieth the ungodly.' He gave notice of my preaching in the evening. At seven many thousands attended in deep silence. Surely the Lord hath much people in this place." They began a society here with nine members, and on June the 27th Mr. C. Wesley set out for London, where he arrived on the evening of the 28th, having visited Oxford in his way thither. —July 3, he says, "Mr. Hall, poor Moravianized Mr. Hall, met me at the chapel. I did him honour before the people. I expounded the gospel, as usual, and strongly avowed my intolerable attachment to the Church of England. Mr. Meriton and Graves assisted at the sacrament.—July 6, I showed from Romans the 5th the marks of justification, and overturned the vain confidence of several. I strongly warned them against seducers, and found my heart knit to this people.—July 8, I. Bray came to persuade me not to preach till the bishops should bid me

* See also Mr. John Wesley's Works, vol. xxviii, page 151.

They have not yet forbid me; but by the grace of God I shall preach the word, in season and out of season, though they and all men forbid me."

July 11. Mr. C. Wesley left London, and the day following arrived in Bristol. He stayed there only one night, and then set out for Cornwall, and on the 16th came safe to St. Ives. July 17, he says, "I rose and forgot that I had travelled from Newcastle. I spake with some of this loving, simple people, who are as sheep in the midst of wolves. The priests stir up the people, and make their minds evil-affected toward their brethren. Yet the sons of violence are much checked by the mayor, an honest Presbyterian, whom the Lord hath raised up." He informed Mr. C. Wesley that the ministers were the principal authors of all the mischief. In their sermons they continually represented Mr. Wesley and the preachers as popish emissaries, and urged the enraged multitude to use all means for their suppression. While he was preaching at St. Ives on the 26th, he observes, "All was quiet, the mayor having declared his resolution to swear twenty more constables, and suppress the rioters by force of arms. Their drum he had seized. All the time I was preaching he stood at a little distance to awe the rioters. He has set the whole town against him by not giving us up to their fury. But he plainly told Mr. Hoblin, the fire-and-faggot minister, that he would not be perjured to gratify any man's malice. He informed us that he had often heard Mr. Hoblin say, they ought to drive us away by blows, not by arguments."

During the riots he one day observes, "I went to church and heard that terrible chapter, Jeremiah the 7th,—enough, one would think, to make even this hardened people tremble. Never were words more applicable than those, 'Stand in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord, are these*!—Behold ye trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely—and come and stand before me in this house?'" &c.—Mr. C. Wesley informed me,

that upon one of those occasions, after hearing himself abused in a sermon longer than usual, he remained in his pew when the congregation was dismissed, it being what is called Sacrament-Sunday. The minister, perceiving him, called to the clerk, took him inside the rails, and talked with him for some time. The minister then proceeded with the service. When Mr. C. Wesley approached the table, the parson retreated, and the clerk came forward, and, holding out the large prayer-book, cried out, "Avaunt, Satan! avaunt!" Mr. C. Wesley remained for some time, but finding that nothing would quiet the zealous clerk, and that the minister remained stationary at the wall, he retired to his pew, and the service concluded.

His brother having summoned him to London to confer with the heads of the Moravians and Calvinists, he set out on the 8th of August. "We had," says he, "near three hundred miles to travel in five days. I was willing to undertake the labour for the sake of peace, though the journey was too great for us and our beasts, which we had used almost every day for three months.—August 12. We hardly reached the Foundery by nine at night. Here I heard that the Moravians would not be present at the conference. Spangenberg indeed said he would, but immediately left England. My brother was come from Newcastle; J. Nelson from Yorkshire; and I from the Land's End, for good purpose!"

October 17. He set out to meet his brother at Nottingham, who had escaped with his life, almost by miracle, out of the hands of the mob at Wednesbury, as before related. On the 21st, Mr. Charles Wesley observes, "My brother came, delivered out of the mouth of the lions! His clothes were dirty and torn.—He looked like a soldier of Christ. The mob of Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Walsal, were permitted to take and carry him about for several hours, with a full intent to murder him: but his work is not yet finished, or he had been now with *the souls under the altar*.—October 24. I had a blessed parting from the society, and by night came wet and weary to Birmingham. On the 25th, I was much encouraged by the patience of our brethren from Wednesbury. They pressed me to come and preach to them in the midst of the town. It was agreed between my brother and me, that if they asked me I should go. Accordingly we set out in the dark and came to Francis

Ward's, from whence my brother had been carried last Thursday night.* I found the brethren assembled, standing fast in one mind and spirit, in nothing terrified by their adversaries. The word given me for them, was, 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong.' Jesus was with us in the midst and covered us with a covering of his Spirit. Never was I before in so primitive an assembly. We sang praises with courage, and could all set our seal to the truth of our Lord's saying, 'Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake.' We laid us down and slept and rose up again, for the Lord sustained us. As soon as it was light I walked down the town and preached boldly. It was a most glorious time! Our souls were satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and we longed for our Lord's coming to 'confess us before his Father, and before his holy angels.'—We now understood what it was to 'receive the word in much affliction,' and yet 'with joy in the Holy Ghost.'

"I took several new members into the society; and among them the young man whose arm had been broke; and received Munchin, upon trial, the late captain of the mob. He has been constantly under the word since he rescued my brother. I asked him what he thought of him? 'Think of him,' said he, 'that he is a man of God, and God was on his side when so many of us could not kill one man.'—We rode through the town unmolested on our way to Birmingham, where I preached. I rode on to Evesham and found John Nelson preaching, and confirmed his word."—On the 31st he set out for Wales, and reached Cardiff on the first of November. "The gentlemen," says he, "had threatened great things if I ever came there again. I called in the midst of them, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,' &c. The love of God constrained me to speak and them to hear. The word was irresistible. After it one of the most violent opposers took me by the hand and pressed me to come and see him. The rest were equally civil all the time I staid; only one drunkard made some disturbance, and when sober sent to ask my pardon.—The voice of praise and thanksgiving was in the society. Many are grown in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

* See Mr. John Wesley's *Works*, vol. xxviii, page 175.

I passed an hour with the wife and daughter of the chief bailiff, who are waiting as little children for the kingdom of God."

He afterward visited Bristol, Bath, Oxford, and London; till January 30, 1744, when he again set out for the north, recommended to the grace of God by all the brethren. On the first of February he came to Birmingham. He observes, "A great door is opened in the country, but there are many adversaries." The preacher at Dudley had been cruelly abused by a mob of papists and dissenters; the dissenters being stirred up by Mr. Whiting, their minister. "It is probable," says Mr. C. Wesley, "that he would have been murdered but for an honest Quaker who favoured his escape by disguising him in his broad hat and drab-coloured coat." "Staffordshire," he observes, "at present seems the seat of war."

"February 2. I set out again with brother Webb for Wednesbury, the field of battle. We met with variety of greetings on the road. I cried in the street, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!' Several of our persecutors stood at a distance, but none offered to make the least disturbance. I walked through the blessings and curses of the people, (but the blessings exceeded,) to visit Mr. Egerton's widow. Never have I observed such bitterness as in these opposers.—February 3, I preached, and prayed with the society, and beat down the fiery self-avenging spirit of resistance, which was rising in some to disgrace if not to destroy the work of God." Mr. C. Wesley preached within sight of Dudley, and then waited on the friendly captain Dudley, who had stood in the gap and kept off persecution at Tippen Green while it raged all around. He then returned in peace through the enemy's country.

The rioters now gave notice that they would come on the Tuesday following and pull down the houses and destroy the goods of the Methodists. "One would think," says Mr. C. Wesley, "there was no king in Israel. There is certainly no magistrate who will put them to shame in any thing. Mr. Constable offered to make oath that their lives were in danger; but the justice refused it, saying that he could do nothing. Others of our complaining brethren met with the same redress, being driven away with revilings. The magistrates do not, like those

of old, themselves 'tear off their clothes and beat them;' they only stand by and see others do it. One of them told Mr. Jones, 'It was the best thing the mob ever did, so to treat the Methodists; and he himself would give five pounds to drive them out of the country.' Another, when our brother Ward begged his protection, delivered him up to the mercy of the mob, who had half murdered him before, and throwing his hat round his head, cried, 'Huzza, boys! Well done! stand up for the church!'" Mr. C. Wesley adds, "No wonder that the mob, so encouraged, should say there is no law for the Methodists! Accordingly like outlaws they treat them, breaking their houses and taking away their goods at pleasure; extorting money from those who have it, and cruelly beating those who have it not.

"February 4. I spoke with those of our brethren who have this world's goods, and found them entirely resigned to the will of God; all thoughts of resistance, blessed be God, are over. The chief of them said to me, 'Naked came I into the world, and I can but go naked out of it.' They are resolved by the grace of God to follow my advice, and to suffer all things. Only I wished them to go round again to the justices and give information of their danger. Mr. Constable said he had just been with one of them, who redressed him only by bitter reproaches,—that the rest were of the same mind, and could not plead ignorance, because the rioters had the boldness to set up papers inviting all the country to rise with them to destroy the Methodists.—At noon I returned to Birmingham, having continued two days in the lions' den unhurt."

Mr. C. Wesley now set out for Nottingham, where he arrived on the 6th, and found that here also the monster persecution was lifting up its destructive head. "Our brethren," says he, "are violently driven from their place of meeting, pelted in the street, &c., and mocked with vain promises of justice by the very man who, underhand, encourages the rioters. An honest Quaker has hardly restrained some of our brethren from resisting evil: but henceforth I hope they will meekly turn the other cheek."

Mr C. Wesley and his friends at Nottingham sent a person to Litchfield, to get intelligence of what mischief had been done in Staffordshire by the rioters in their threatened insurrection.

He returned on the ninth, and Mr. C. Wesley gives the following account. "He met our brother Ward, who had fled thither for refuge. The enemy had gone to the length of his chain: all the rabble of the county were gathered together, and laid waste all before them. I received a note from two of the sufferers, whose loss amounts to two hundred pounds. My heart rejoiced in the great grace which was given them; for not one resisted evil; but 'they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.' We gave God the glory that Satan was not suffered to touch their lives: they have lost all besides, and 'rejoice with joy unspeakable.'"

Mr. C. Wesley now went on to Newcastle, preaching every where as he had opportunity, till on March the 14th, being at Birstal, a person informed him there of a constable who had a warrant in which his name was mentioned. Mr. C. Wesley sent for him and found it was "To summon witnesses to some treasonable words said to be spoken by one *Westley*." He was just leaving Birstal when this information was given him; but he now determined not to go forward for London as he intended, thinking it better to appear before the justices at Wakefield, and, as he says, look his enemies in the face. Accordingly he rode to Wakefield the next morning, and waited on justice Burton at his inn, with two other justices, Sir Rowland Wynn, and the Rev. Mr. Zouch. He informed Mr. Burton that he had seen a warrant of his, summoning witnesses of some treasonable words said to be spoken by one Westley: that he had put off his journey to London that he might answer whatever should be laid to his charge.—Mr. Burton replied, he had nothing to say against him, and he might depart.—Mr. C. Wesley answered, "That is not sufficient without clearing my character, and that of many innocent people whom their enemies are pleased to call Methodists.—'Vindicate them!' said my brother clergyman, 'that you will find a very hard task.'—I answered, As hard as you may think it, I will engage to prove that all of them, to a man, are true members of the church of England, and loyal subjects of his majesty king George. I then desired they would administer to me the oaths; and added, I wish, gentlemen, that you could send for every Methodist in England, and give them all the same opportunity you do me, of declaring their loyalty upon oath.—Justice Burton said he

was informed that we constantly prayed for the pretender in all our societies, or nocturnal meetings, as Mr. Zouch called them. —I answered, The very reverse is true. We constantly pray for his majesty king George, by name. Here are such hymns (showing them) as we sing in our societies. Here is a sermon which I preached before the university, and another preached there by my brother. Here are his Appeals and a few more tracts containing an account of our principles and practices. I then gave them our books, and was bold enough to say, I am as true a Church-of-England man, and as loyal a subject, as any man in the kingdom !—They all cried, that was impossible. But it was not my business to dispute, and as I could not answer till the witnesses appeared, I withdrew without further delay.

"While I waited at a neighbour's house the constable from Birstal, whose heart the Lord had touched, was brought to me by one of the brethren. He told me he had summoned the principal witness, Mary Castle, on whose information the warrant was granted. She was setting out on horseback when the news came that I was not gone forward to London, as they expected, but had returned to Wakefield. Hearing this she turned back, and declared to him that she did not hear the treasonable words herself, but another woman had told her so. Three more witnesses, who were to swear to my words, retracted likewise, and knew nothing of the matter. The fifth, Mr. Woods, an alehouse-keeper, is forth-coming, it seems, in the afternoon. I now plainly see what the consequence would have been of not appearing here to look my enemies in the face. Had I gone on my journey there would have been witnesses enough and oaths enough to stir up a persecution against the Methodists. I took the witnesses' names, and a copy of the warrant, which is as follows :

'WESTRIDING OF YORKSHIRE.

'*To the constable of Birstal, of the said Riding, or deputy.*

'These are, in his majesty's name, to require and command you to summon Mary Castle, of Birstal aforesaid, and all other such person or persons as you are informed can give any information against one Westley, or any other of the Methodist preachers, for speaking any treasonable words or exhortations.

as praying for the banished, or the pretender, &c., to appear before me, and other of his majesty's justices of the peace for the said Riding, at the White Hart in Wakefield, on the 15th of March instant, by ten o'clock in the forenoon, to be examined, and to declare the truth of what they and each of them know touching the premises: and that you likewise make a return hereof before us on the same day. Fail not. Given under my hand the tenth of March, 1744. E. BURTON.'

"Between two and three o'clock Mr. Woods came, and started back on seeing me as if he had trod upon a serpent. One of the brethren took hold of him, and told me he trembled every joint of him. The justices' clerk had bid the constable bring Woods to him as soon as ever he came. But notwithstanding the clerk's instructions Woods frankly confessed, now he was come, he had nothing to say, and would not have come at all if they had not forced him.

"I waited at the door till seven in the evening while they were examining the disaffected. I took public notice of Okerhousen, the Moravian teacher; but not of Mr. Kendrick. When all their business was over, and I had been insulted at their door from eleven in the morning till seven at night, I was sent for and asked, 'What would Mr. Wesley desire?'

"*Wesley.*—I desire nothing but to know what is alleged against me.—Justice Burton said, what hope of truth from him? Then addressing himself to me, 'Here are two of your brethren, one so silly it is a shame he should ever set up for a teacher; and the other has a thousand lies and equivocations upon oath. He has not wit enough or he would make a complete Jesuit.'—I looked round and said, I see none of my brethren here but this gentleman, pointing to the reverend justice, who looked as if he did not thank me for claiming him.

"*Burton.*—Why, do you not know this man? pointing to Kendrick.

"*Wesley.*—Yes, sir, very well: for, two years ago I expelled him from our society in London for setting up for a preacher.—To this poor Kendrick assented; which put a stop to further reflections on the Methodists.—Justice Burton then said I might depart, for they had nothing against me.

"*Wesley.*—Sir, that will not satisfy me; I cannot depart till

my character be fully cleared. It is no trifling matter: even my life is concerned in the charge.

"*Burton.*—I did not summon you to appear.

"*Wesley.*—I was the person meant by *one Westley*, and my supposed words were the occasion of your order, which I read signed with your name.

"*Burton.*—I will not deny my orders; I did send to summon the witnesses.

"*Wesley.*—Yes; and I took down their names from the constable's paper. The principal witness, Mary Castle, was setting out; but hearing I was here she turned back, and declared to the constable she only heard another say that I had spoken treason. Three more of the witnesses recanted for the same reason: and Mr. Woods, who is here, says he has nothing to say, and should not have come had he not been forced by the minister. Had I not been here he would have had enough to say; and you would have had witnesses and oaths enough; but I suppose my coming has prevented theirs.—One of the justices added, 'I suppose so too.' They all seemed fully satisfied and would have had me to be so too. But I insisted on their hearing Mr. Woods.

"*Burton.*—Do you desire he may be called as an evidence for you?

"*Wesley.*—I desire he may be heard as an evidence against me, if he has aught to lay to my charge.

"Then Mr. Zouch asked Mr. Woods what he had to say? What were the words I had spoken? Woods was as backward to speak as they to hear him: but was at last compelled to say, 'I have nothing to say against the gentleman: I only heard him pray that the Lord would call home his banished ones.'

"*Zouch.*—But were there no words before or after which pointed to these troublesome times?

"*Woods.*—No: none at all.

"*Wesley.*—It was on February the 12th, before the earliest news of the invasion. But if folly and malice may be interpreters, any words which any of you, gentlemen, may speak, may be construed into treason.

"*Zouch.*—It is very true.

"*Wesley.*—Now, gentlemen, give me leave to explain my own words. I had no thoughts of praying for the Pretender;

but for those who 'confess themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth; who seek a country,' knowing this is not their home. The scriptures,—yes, sir, (to the clergyman,) you know that the scriptures speak of us as captive exiles, who are 'absent from the Lord, while present in the body.' We are not at home till we are in heaven.

"*Zouch.*—I thought you would so explain the words, and it is a fair interpretation.

"I asked if they were all satisfied?—They said they were; and cleared me as fully as I desired.—I then asked them again to administer to me the oaths.—Mr. Zouch looked on my sermon and asked who ordained me.—I answered, the archbishop, and the bishop of London, in the same week.—He said, with the rest, it was quite unnecessary, since I was a clergyman and student of Christ Church, and had preached before the university and taken the oaths before.—Yet I mentioned it again, till they acknowledged in explicit terms, 'That my loyalty was unquestionable.' I then presented Sir Rowland and Mr. Zouch with the 'Appeal to men of Reason and Religion,' and took my leave."

Mr. C. Wesley now returned to Birstal, where he preached, and then departed from Yorkshire. He came to Derby and Nottingham; at the last of which places the mob was become outrageous, under the patronage of the mayor. The Methodists presented a petition to the judge, as he passed through the town; and he gave the mayor a severe reprimand, and encouraged them to apply for relief if they were further molested. But the mayor paid no regard to the judge, any longer than while he was present.

On Friday, August 24, 1744, Mr. John Wesley preached for the last time at Oxford, before the university.* He had preached to them twice before, since the time he began to declare the truth in the fields and highways. Those sermons are printed in

* Mr. C. Wesley came to Oxford on this occasion, where he met his brother, the Rev. Messrs. Piers, Meriton, and others. He observes in his journal, "My brother bore his testimony before a crowded audience, much increased by the races. Never have I seen a more attentive congregation: they did not suffer a word to slip them. Some of the heads of colleges stood up the whole time and fixed their eyes upon him. If they can endure sound doctrine like his he will surely leave a blessing behind him. The vice-chancellor sent after him and desired his notes, which he sealed up and sent immediately."

the first volume of his Works, and are well worthy of a serious perusal. "I am now," says he, "clear of the blood of those men. I have fully delivered my own soul. And I am well pleased that it should be the very day on which, in the last century, near two thousand burning and shining lights were put out at one stroke. Yet what a wide difference is there between their case and mine! They were turned out of house and home, and all that they had; whereas I am only hindered from preaching without any other loss, and that in a kind of honourable manner; it being determined that when my next turn to preach came they would pay another person to preach for me. And so they did twice or thrice; even to the time that I resigned my fellowship."—They respected his general character, with which they were well acquainted.

Mr. Wesley's observation respecting the ejection of so many pious and able ministers, is affecting. It was an awful act, and an awful responsibility remains with those who exercised such an authority. But 'the Lord reigneth, and the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise.' I cannot but think that the Lord, 'who is head over all things to his church,' saw that there was no other way of saving the nation from that deluge of Antinomianism which threatened to overwhelm it. How many children of light were thus called to walk in providential darkness! But he had a better dispensation in store for his people: A dispensation that never did, that never can, disturb the providential government; which was not given 'by might or power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'

CHAPTER II.

ACCOUNTS FROM GERMANY OF THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THE ENGLISH ARMY—THE FIRST CONFERENCES—THE LABOURS OF THE BROTHERS, AND OF THEIR ASSISTANTS, DURING THE REBELLION IN SCOTLAND.

THE work of God, which it is the design of these volumes to illustrate, shows its true origin, not only in its being declared to be the privilege of *every creature*, but in its being received by "all sorts and conditions of men," *not in the letter only, but in the Spirit.* It has indeed been thought, and by many who are remarkable for the spirituality of their creed, not only that war is contrary to the religion of Christ, but that all who are engaged therein are excluded from its blessings. It is evident, however, that no prophet, or apostle, nor their blessed Master, has told us so. He showed his good will to men thus awfully employed, with as much benignity as to any others. We know that when the gospel has had its full effect on the human race it will banish war from the earth. Meantime, all hostility between man and man is totally forbidden: but where is the MAGISTRATE forbidden to go to war? To deprive him of *his sword* while "the world lieth in wickedness," seems a bold design; nor will its being sometimes used unrighteously, excuse the attempt. I am, therefore, happy in being able to present to the reader some proofs, that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" can keep the hearts of those who know him, in the midst of those scenes so revolting not only to pure religion but also to humanity. A few letters which Mr. Wesley received about this time from some of the English soldiers in Germany will illustrate what I have said. The principal instrument of the work therein related was afterward a preacher, in connexion with Mr. Wesley, for several years; and his life has been published. I shall give those letters together, though written at some distance of time from each other, as they will afford a more complete view of this work of God in the British army.

"REVEREND SIR,

"We marched to the camp near Brussels on the 1st of May, 1744. There a few of us joined in a society, being sensible 'where two or three are gathered together in his name, there' is our Lord 'in the midst of them.' Our place of meeting was a small wood near the camp. We remained in this camp eight days, and then removed to a place called Arsk. Here I began to speak openly, at a small distance from the camp, just in the middle of the English army. And here it pleased God to give me some evidences that my labour was not in vain. We sung a hymn, which drew about two hundred soldiers together, and they all behaved decently. After I had prayed I began to exhort them; and though it rained very hard yet very few went away. Many acknowledged the truth; in particular a young man, John Greenwood, who has kept with me ever since, and whom God has lately been pleased to give me for a fellow labourer Our society is now increased to upward of two hundred, and the hearers are frequently more than a thousand; although many say I am mad, and others have endeavoured to incense the fieldmarshal against us. I have been sent for and examined several times. But, blessed be God, he has always delivered me.

"Many of the officers have come to hear for themselves, often nine or ten at a time. I endeavoured to lose no opportunity. During our abode in the camp at Arsk I have preached thirty-five times in seven days. One of those times a soldier, who was present, called aloud to his comrades to come away and not hear that fool any longer. But it pleased God to send the word spoken to his heart, so that he roared out in the bitterness of his soul for a considerable time; and then he, who never fails those that seek him, turned his heaviness into joy. He is now never so happy as when he is proclaiming the loving-kindness of God his Saviour.

"I was a little shocked at my first entrance on this great work, because I was alone, having none to help me. But the Lord helped me, and soon raised up William Clements, and, in June, John Evans, belonging to the train [of artillery,] to my assistance. Since we have been in this camp we have built two small tabernacles, in which we meet at eight in the morning,

at three in the afternoon, and seven at night: and commonly two whole nights in each week.*

"Since I began to write this we are come to our quarters, so that our society is now divided. Some of us are in Bruges and some in Ghent. But it has pleased the Lord to leave neither place without a teacher: for John Greenwood and I are in this city, and B. Clements and Evans are in Ghent. So that we trust our Lord will carry on his work in both places.

We that are in Bruges have hired a small place in which we meet; and our dear Lord is in the midst of us. Many times the tears run down every face, and joy reigns in every heart.

"I shall conclude with a full assurance of your prayers, with a longing desire to see you. O when will the joyful meeting be! Perhaps not on this side death. If not, my Master's will be done!

"Your unworthy brother in the Lord,

"JOHN HAIME.

"*To the Rev. Mr. Wesley.*"

"GHENT, *Nov.* 12, *O. S.*, 1744.

"REVEREND SIR,

"We made bold to trouble you with this to acquaint you with some of the Lord's dealings with us here. We have hired two rooms, one small one, wherein a few of us meet every day at one o'clock; and another large one for public service, where we meet twice a day, at nine in the morning and four in the afternoon; and the hand of the omnipotent God is with us to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan.

"The 7th instant, when we were met together in the evening, as I was at prayer, one that was kneeling by me cried out, (like a woman in travail,) 'My Redeemer! my Redeemer!' which continued about ten minutes. When he was asked, 'What was the matter?' he said, 'He had found that which he had often heard of, that is, *a heaven upon earth!*' and some others had much ado to forbear crying out in the same manner.

"Dear sir, I am a stranger to you in the flesh. I know not if I have seen you above once when I saw you preaching on

* The duke of Cumberland came one night, wrapt up in his cloak, and staid the whole time. He afterward gave orders that no person should hinder Haime.

Kennington common. And then I hated you as much as now, by the grace of God, I love you. The Lord pursued me with convictions from my infancy, and I often made abundance of good resolutions. But finding, as often, that I could not keep them, (as being made wholly in my own strength,) I at length left off all striving and gave myself over to all manner of lewdness and profaneness. So I continued for some years till the battle of Dettingen. The balls came very thick about me and my comrades fell on every side. Yet I was preserved unhurt. A few days after this the Lord was pleased to visit me again. The pains of hell gat hold upon me; the snares of death encompassed me. I durst no longer commit any outward sin, and I prayed God to be merciful to my soul. Now I was at a loss for books; but God took care for this also. One day as I was at work I found an old Bible in one of the train-wagons. To read this I soon forsook my old companions; all but one, who was still a thorn in my flesh. But not long after he sickened and died.

"My Bible was now my only companion, and I believed myself a very good Christian, till we came to winter quarters, where I met with John Haime. But I was soon sick of his company: for he robbed me of my treasure; he stole away my gods, telling me, 'I and my works were going to hell together.' This was strange doctrine to me, who, being wholly ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, sought only to establish my own righteousness. And being naturally of a stubborn temper, my poor brother was so perplexed with me, that sometimes he was resolved (as he afterward told me) to forbid my coming to him any more.

"When the Lord had at length opened my eyes, and shown me that 'by grace we are saved, through faith,' I began immediately to declare it to others, though I had not as yet experienced it myself. But, October 23, as William Clements was at prayer, I felt on a sudden a great alteration in my soul. My eyes overflowed with tears of love. I knew I was through Christ reconciled to God; which inflamed my soul with fervent love to him, whom I now saw to be my complete Redeemer.

"O the tender care of Almighty God in bringing up his children! How are we bound to love so indulgent a Father.

and to fall down in wonder and adoration of his great and glorious name for his tender mercies!—Dear sir, I beg you will pray for him who is not worthy to be a door-keeper to the least of my Master's servants. JOHN EVANS."*

"*October* 10, 1745.

"REVEREND SIR,

"I shall acquaint you with the Lord's dealings with us since April last. We marched from Ghent to Allost on the 14th, where I met with two or three of our brethren in the fields, and we sung and prayed together and were comforted. On the 15th, I met a small company about three miles from the town, and the Lord filled our hearts with love and peace. On the 17th, we marched to camp near Brussels. On the 18th, I met a small congregation on the side of the hill, and spoke from those words, 'Let us go forth, therefore, to Him without the camp, bearing his reproach.' On the 28th, I spoke from those words of Isaiah, 'Thus saith the Lord concerning the house of Jacob: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.' On the 29th, we marched close to the enemy, and when I saw them in their camp, my bowels moved toward them in love and pity for their souls. We lay on our arms all night. In the morning, April 30, the cannon began to play at half an hour after four; and the Lord took away all fear from me, so that I went into the field with joy. The balls flew on either hand, and men fell in abundance; but nothing touched me till about two o'clock. Then I received a ball through my left arm, and rejoiced so much the more. Soon after I received another into my right, which obliged me to quit the field. But I scarce knew whether I was on earth or in heaven: it was one of the sweetest days I ever enjoyed.

"WILLIAM CLEMENTS."

"LEARE, *near* ANTWERP, *October* 21, 1745.

"REVEREND SIR,

"Since I wrote to you last I have gone through great trials. It was not the least that I have lost my dear brother

* He continued both to preach and to live the gospel till the battle of Fontenoy. One of his companions saw him there, laid across a cannon, (both his legs having been taken off by a chain shot,) praising God, and exhorting all that were round about him; which he did till his spirit returned to God.

Clements for a season, he being shot through both the arms. To try me farther, J. Evans and Bishop were both killed in the battle, as was J. Greenwood soon after. Two more, who spoke boldly in the name of Jesus, are fallen into the world again. So I am left alone: but I know it is for my good. Seeing iniquity so much abound, and the love of many wax cold, adds wings to my devotion, and my faith grows daily as a plant by the water side.

"The Lord has been pleased to try our little flock, and to show them his mighty power. Some days before the late battle, one of them, standing at his tent door, broke out into raptures of joy knowing his departure was at hand, and was so filled with the love of God that he danced before his comrades. In the battle before he died he openly declared, 'I am going to rest from my labours in the bosom of Jesus.' I believe nothing like this was ever heard of before in the midst of so wicked an army as ours. Some were crying out in their wounds, 'I am going to my Beloved!' others, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' and many that were not wounded were crying to their Lord to take them to himself. There was such boldness in the battle among this little despised flock that it made the officers as well as common soldiers amazed; and they acknowledge it to this day. As to my own part I stood the fire of the enemy for above seven hours. Then my horse was shot under me, and I was exposed both to the enemy and our own horse. But that did not discourage me at all; for I knew the God of Jacob was with me. I had a long way to go, the balls flying on every side; and thousands lay bleeding, groaning, dying, and dead on each hand. Surely I was as in the fiery furnace, but it never singed one hair of my head. The hotter it grew the more strength was given me. I was full of joy and love, as much as I could well bear. Going on I met one of our brethren with a little dish in his hand, seeking for water. He smiled and said, 'he had got a sore wound in his leg.' I asked, 'Have you got Christ in your heart?' He answered, 'I have, and I have had him all the day. Blessed be God, that I ever saw your face.' Lord, what am I, that I should be counted worthy to set my hand to the gospel plough? Lord, humble me, and lay me in the dust!

JOHN HAIME."

The work in England now extended with a rapidity which far exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine. For some years the preachers moved round the kingdom as Mr. Wesley thought best, from time to time, without any regular plan. But he now found it absolutely necessary to divide the whole work into circuits, appointing so many preachers to each circuit. This plan was attended with many difficulties, and it seemed at first that the unity of the body could not be preserved, on account of the clashing interests of the circuits. But a remedy was soon found out for this threatening evil, viz. to summon annually a considerable number of the preachers, in order to consult together concerning the affairs of the societies. The preachers thus met with him at their head he termed *The conference;* which name is now so familiar among the people that *the conference* is always understood to mean the body of preachers thus annually assembled. His design in calling them together was not merely for the regulation of the circuits, but also for the review of their doctrines and discipline, and for the examination of their moral conduct; that those who were to minister with him in holy things might be thoroughly furnished for every good work, for "the saving of their own souls as well as them that heard them."

In treating on so essential a part of the discipline established by Mr. Wesley as *the annual conferences*, from which infinite blessings through the grace of God have been derived, not only in the government and union of the whole connexion, but in the preservation and enforcement of purity and holiness among the preachers, I shall be necessarily obliged to speak of many things with which several of my readers are already acquainted. But it is not possible to give a complete view to the world of that great work in which Mr. Wesley was the principal instrument, without enlarging on so important a branch of it. For which purpose I shall give the most remarkable conversations which passed in these conferences, especially in the earliest of them, when the grand points in respect both to doctrines and discipline were laid down, methodised, and established; which have continued unshaken even to the present day.

CONVERSATION I.

London, 25th of June, 1744.

It is desired, that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God: that we may meet with a single eye, and as little children who have every thing to learn: that every point which is proposed may be examined to the foundation: that every person may speak freely whatever is in his heart: and that every question which arises may be thoroughly debated and settled.

Q. 1. Need we be fearful of doing this? What are we afraid of? Of overturning our first principles?

A. If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest examination. Let us all pray for a willingness to receive light, to know of every doctrine whether it be of God.*

Q. 2. How may the time of this conference be made more eminently a time of watching unto prayer?

A. 1. While we are conversing let us have an especial care to set God always before us. 2. In the intermediate hours let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises. 3. Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on this our labour.

Q. 3. How far does each of us agree to submit to the judgment of the majority?

A. In speculative things, each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced; in every practical point, each will submit so far as he can without wounding his conscience.

Q. 4. Can a Christian submit any farther than this to any man, or number of men, upon earth?

A. It is plain he cannot; either to bishop, convocation, or general council. And this is that grand principle of private judgment on which all the reformers proceeded: "Every man must judge for himself; because every man must give an account of himself to God."

CONVERSATION II.

The design of the meeting was proposed, namely, to consider —1. What to teach. 2. How to teach. And 3. What to do;

* Could any work that was not of God endure such an ordeal as this? Surely *it is the Lord who maketh men to be thus of one mind in a house*.

i. e. how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice. They began with considering the doctrine of *Justification*: The questions relating thereto, with the substance of the answers given, were as follow:

Q. 1. What is it to be justified?

A. To be pardoned and received into God's favour; into such a state that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved.

Q. 2. Is faith the condition of justification?

A. Yes; 'for every one who believeth not is condemned; and every one who believes is justified.'

Q. 3. But must not repentance, and works meet for repentance, go before this faith?

A. Without doubt: if by *repentance* you mean conviction of sin; and by 'works meet for repentance,' obeying God as far as we can, forgiving our brother, ceasing to do evil, doing good, and using the ordinances according to the power we have received.

Q. 4. What is faith?

A. Faith in general is a divine supernatural Ελεγχος* of things not seen; i. e. of past, future, or spiritual things: it is a spiritual sight of God and the things of God.

First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.' This is that faith by which he is justified or pardoned the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, "Thou art pardoned: thou hast redemption in his blood." And this is saving faith, whereby 'the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.'

Q. 5. Have all Christians this faith? May not a man be justified and not know it?

A. That all true Christians have such a faith as implies an assurance of God's love, appears from Rom. viii, 15, 16; Eph. v, 32; 2 Cor. xiii, 5; Heb. viii, 10—12; 1 John iv, 13, and v, 19. And that no man can be justified and not know it, appears farther from the nature of the thing. For faith after repentance is ease after pain, rest after toil, light after darkness. It appears also from the immediate as well as distant fruits thereof.

Q. 6. But may not a man go to heaven without it?

* Conviction or evidence

A. It does not appear from holy writ, that a man who hears the gospel can, (Mark xvi, 16,) whatever a heathen may do. (Rom. ii, 14.)

Q. 7. What are the immediate fruits of justifying faith?

A. Peace, joy, love; power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin.

Q. 8. Does any one believe who has not the witness in himself, or any longer than he sees, loves, and obeys God?

A. We apprehend not; *seeing God* being the very essence of faith; love and obedience the inseparable properties of it.

Q. 9. What sins are consistent with justifying faith?

A. No *wilful sin*. If a believer wilfully sins he casts away his faith. Neither is it possible he should have justifying faith again without previously repenting.

Q. 10. Must every believer come into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness? Will he do so unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness? Does God otherwise withdraw himself?

A. It is certain a believer *need never* again come into condemnation. It seems he need not come into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness; and that (ordinarily at least,) he *will not*, unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness. Yet it is true that the first joy does seldom last long; that it is commonly followed by doubts and fears; and that God frequently permits great heaviness before any large manifestation of himself.

Q. 11. Are *works* necessary to the continuance of *faith?*

A. Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God either by sins of omission or commission.

Q. 12. Can faith be lost but for want of works?

A. It cannot but through disobedience.

Q. 13. How is faith *made perfect by works?*

A. The more we exert our faith the more it is increased. 'To him that hath shall be given.'

Q. 14. St. Paul says, 'Abraham was not justified by works.' St. James, 'He was justified by works.' Do they not contradict each other?

A. No: 1. Because they do not speak of the same justification. St. Paul speaks of that justification which was when Abraham was seventy-five years old, about twenty years before Isaac was born. St. James, of that justification which was

when he offered up Isaac on the altar. 2. Because they do not speak of the same works: St. Paul speaking of works that precede faith: St. James, of works that spring from it.

Q. 15. In what sense is Adam's sin imputed to all mankind?

A. In Adam all die, i. e. 1. Our bodies then became mortal. 2. Our souls died, i. e. were disunited from God. And hence, 3. We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature: by reason whereof, 4. We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. (Rom. v, 18; Eph. ii, 3.)

Q. 16. In what sense is the righteousness of Christ imputed to all mankind, or to believers?

A. We do not find it expressly affirmed in Scripture, that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to any:* although we do find that 'faith is imputed to us for righteousness.'

That text, 'As by one man's disobedience, all men were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, all were made righteous,' we conceive means, by the merits of Christ all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's *actual* sin.

We conceive farther, That through the obedience and death of Christ, 1. The bodies of all men become immortal after the resurrection. 2. Their souls receive a capacity of spiritual life; and 3. An actual spark or seed thereof. 4. All believers become children of grace, reconciled to God; and 5. Are made partakers of the divine nature.

Q. 17. Have we not leaned toward *Antinomianism*?

A. We are afraid we have.

Q. 18. What is *Antinomianism?*

A. The doctrine which makes void the law through faith.

Q. 19. What are the main pillars thereof?

A. 1. That Christ abolished the moral law. 2. That therefore Christians are not obliged to observe it. 3. That one branch of Christian liberty is liberty from obeying the commandments of God. 4. That it is bondage to do a thing because it is commanded, or forbear it because it is forbidden. 5. That a believer is not obliged to use the ordinances of God,

* That is, his *personal* righteousness. This is the great Antinomian error. But the divine atonement, with its glorious concomitants, may be called *his righteousness;* and may be said to be imputed to believers, as it was wrought for guilty man, and by the merit of it only can he be justified.

or to do good works. 6. That a preacher ought not to exhort to good works: not unbelievers, because it is hurtful; not believers, because it is needless.

CONVERSATION III.

Q. 1. Is a *sense* of God's pardoning love absolutely necessary to our being in his favour? Or may there be some exempt cases?

A. We dare not say there are not.

Q. 2. Is it necessary to inward and outward holiness?

A. We incline to think it is.

Q. 3. Does a man believe any longer than he sees a reconciled God?

A We conceive not. But we allow there may be infinite degrees in seeing God: even as many as there are between him who sees the sun, when it shines on his eyelids closed, and him who stands with his eyes wide open in the full blaze of its beams.

Q. 4. Does a man believe any longer than he loves God.

A. In no wise. For 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth, without faith working by love.'

Q. 5. Have we duly considered the case of Cornelius? Was not he in the favour of God, 'when his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God?' i. e. Before he believed in Christ?

A. It does seem that he was, in some degree. But we speak not of those who have not heard the gospel.

Q. 6. Is a believer constrained to obey God?

A. At first he often is. 'The love of Christ constraineth him.' After this he may obey or he may not, no constraint being laid upon him.

Q. 7. Can faith be lost but through disobedience?

A. It cannot. A believer first inwardly disobeys, inclines to sin with his heart; then his intercourse with God is cut off, i. e. his faith is lost: and after this he may fall into outward sin, being now weak and like another man.

Q. 8. How can such a one recover faith?

A. By repenting and doing the first works. (Rev. ii, 5.)

Q. 9. Do we ordinarily represent a justified state so great and happy as it is?

A. Perhaps not. A believer, walking in the light, is inexpressibly great and happy.

Q. 10. Should we not have a care of depreciating justification in order to exalt the state of full sanctification?

A. Undoubtedly we should beware of this; for one may insensibly slide into it.

Q. 11. How shall we effectually avoid it?

A. When we are going to speak of entire sanctification, let us first describe the blessings of a justified state as strongly as possible.

Q. 12. Does not the truth of the gospel lie very near both to *Calvinism* and *Antinomianism?*

A. Indeed it does; as it were, within a hair's breadth.* So that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because we do not quite agree either with one or the other, to run from them as far as ever we can.

Q. 13. Wherein may we come to the very edge of Calvinism?

A. 1. In ascribing all good to the free grace of God. 2. In denying all *natural* free-will, and all power antecedent to grace. And 3. In excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God.

Q. 14. Wherein may we come to the edge of Antinomianism?

A. 1. In exalting the merits and love of Christ. 2. In rejoicing evermore.

Q. 15. Does faith supersede (set aside the necessity of) holiness or good works?

A. In no wise. So far from it that it implies both, as a cause does its effects.

CONVERSATION IV.

Q. 1. What is sincerity?

A. Willingness to know and do the whole will of God. The lowest species thereof seems to be *faithfulness in that which is little.*

Q. 2. Has God any regard to man's sincerity?

A. So far, that no man in any state can possibly please God without it; nor indeed in any moment wherein he is not sincere.

Q. 3. But can it be conceived that God has any regard to the sincerity of an unbeliever?

* So near does the road of truth lie to the ditch of error! But a believer who abides in the faith, sees and abhors it, 1 John i, 5—7.

A. Yes, so much, that if he persevere therein, God will infallibly give him faith.

Q. 4. What regard may we conceive him to have to the sincerity of a believer?

A. So much, that in every sincere believer he fulfils all the great and precious promises.

Q. 5. Whom do you term *a sincere believer?*

A. One that 'walks in the light, as God is in the light.'

Q. 6. Is not sincerity all in all?

A. All will follow persevering sincerity. God gives every thing with it; nothing without it.

Q. 7. Are not then sincerity and faith equivalent terms?

A. By no means. It is at least as nearly related to works as it is to faith. For example: Who is sincere before he believes? He that, according to the power he has received, brings forth 'fruits meet for repentance.' Who is sincere after he believes? He that, from a sense of God's love, is zealous of all good works.

Q. 8. But do you consider, That we are under the covenant of grace? And that the covenant of works is now abolished?

A. All mankind were under the covenant of grace, from the very hour that the original promise was made. If by the covenant of works you mean, that of unsinning obedience made with Adam before the fall, no man, but Adam, was ever under that covenant.

CONVERSATION V.

Q. 1. Is not the whole dispute of salvation by faith, or by works, a mere *strife of words?*

A. In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this: 1. That pardon (salvation begun) is received by faith, producing works. 2. That holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love. 3. That heaven (salvation finished) is the reward of this faith.

If those who assert salvation by works or by faith and works, mean the same thing, (understanding by *faith*, the revelation of Christ in us; by *salvation*, pardon, holiness, glory,) we will not strive with *them* at all. If they do not, this is not *a strife of words:* but the very vitals, the essence of Christianity is the thing in question.

Q. 2. May not some degree of the love of God go before a distinct sense of justification?

A. We believe it may. [That is, *the drawings of love.* John vi, 44.]

CONVERSATION VI.

The doctrine of sanctification was considered: with regard to which the questions asked and the substance of the answers given, were as follow:

Q. 1. What is it to be sanctified?

A. To be renewed in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.

Q. 2. Is faith the condition or the instrument of sanctification?

A. It is both the condition and instrument of it. When we begin to believe, then sanctification begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.

Q. 3. What is implied in being *a perfect Christian?*

A. The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul, and strength. (Deut. vi, 5; xxx, 6; Ezek. xxxvi, 25—29.)

Q. 4. Does this imply, That all inward sin is taken away?

A. Without doubt: or how could he be said to be saved from *all his uncleannesses?* (Ezek. xxxvi, 29.)

Q. 5. Can we know one who is thus saved? What is a reasonable proof of it?

A. We cannot, without the miraculous discernment of spirits, be infallibly certain of those who are thus saved. But we apprehend these would be the best proofs which the nature of the thing admits: 1. If we had sufficient evidence of their unblamable behaviour preceding. 2. If they gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein they were saved from sin, and of the circumstances thereof, with such sound speech as could not be reproved. And 3. If upon a strict inquiry afterward from time to time, it appeared that all their tempers and words and actions were holy and unreprovable.

Q. 6. How should we treat those who think they have attained this?

A. Exhort them to forget the things that are behind, and to watch and pray always, that God may search the ground of their hearts.

CONVERSATION VII.

Q. 1. How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us with regard to entire sanctification?

A. They grant: 1. That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death. 2. That till then a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection. 3. That we ought to be continually pressing after this, and to exhort all others so to do.

Q. 2. What do we allow them?

A. We grant; 1. That many of those who have died in the faith, yea the greater part of those we have known, were not sanctified throughout, not made perfect in love, till a little before death. 2. That the term "sanctified" is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified, were true believers. 3. That by this term alone, he rarely (if ever) means, saved from all sin. 4. That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word "Wholly, entirely," or the like. 5. That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified; but very rarely, either of, or to those, who were wholly sanctified. 6. That consequently, it behooves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of justification; but more rarely, in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.*

Q. 3. What then is the point wherein we divide?

A. It is this: Whether we should expect to be saved from all sin before the article of death?

Q. 4. Is there any clear Scripture *promise* of this? that God will save us from all sin?

A. There is, Psalm cxxx, 8: 'He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.'

This is more largely expressed in the prophecy of Ezekiel; 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from *all* your filthiness and from *all* your idols I will cleanse you—I will also save you from *all* your uncleannesses.' (xxxvi, 25—29.) No promise can be more clear. And to this the apostle plainly refers in that exhortation, 'Having these

* At that time our congregations in general 'needed to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God.' It is not so now. They need now to be urged to 'leave these principles of the doctrine of Christ,' and 'to go on to perfection:' and not a few have 'lost their first love,' and turned back to the world, for want of being thus urged.

promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' (2 Cor. vii, 1.) —Equally clear and express is that ancient promise, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.' (Deut. xxx, 6.)

Q. 5. But does any *assertion*, answerable to this, occur in the New Testament?

A. There does, and that laid down in the plainest terms. So, 1 John iii, 8: 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;'—'the works of the devil,' without any limitation or restriction: but all sin is the work of the devil. Parallel to which is that assertion of St. Paul, Eph. v, 25, 27: 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

And to the same effect is his assertion in Rom. viii, 3, 4: 'God sent his Son—*that the* righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.'

Q. 6. Does the New Testament afford any farther ground for expecting to be saved from all sin?

A. Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands, which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

Q. 7. What prayers do you mean?

A. Prayers for entire sanctification; which, were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God. Such in particular, are,—1. 'Deliver us from evil;' or rather, απο τυ πονηρυ, '*from the evil one.*' Now, when this is done, when we are delivered from all evil, there can be no sin remaining.—2. 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' (John xvii, 20, 21, 23.)—3. 'I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—that he would grant you—that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness

of God.' (Eph. iii, 14, 16—19.)—4. 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1 Thess. v, 23.)

Q. 8. What commands are there to the same effect?

A. 1. 'Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' (Matt. v, ult.)—2. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' (Matt. xxii, 37.) But if the love of God fill all the heart there can be no sin there.

Q. 9. But how does it appear that this is to be done before the article of death?

A. *First.* From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead but to the living. Therefore, 'Thou shalt love God with all thy heart,' cannot mean, "Thou shalt do this when thou diest," but "while thou livest."

Secondly. From express texts of Scripture:—1. 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that having renounced (αρνησαμενοι) ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: looking for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from ALL iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' (Titus ii, 11—14.)—2. 'He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us—to perform the mercy promised to our fathers: the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' (Luke i, 69, &c.)

Q. 10. Is there any example in Scripture of persons who had attained to this?

A. Yes; St. John, and all those of whom he says in his First Epistle, (iv, 17,) 'Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world.'

Q. 11. Does not the preaching perfection with harshness tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage, or slavish fear?

A. It does. Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire.

Q. 12. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith even till we are made perfect?

A. Why, indeed? Since holy grief does not quench this joy; since, even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable.

Q. 13. Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore?

A. We ought not so to do. Let them, all their life long, rejoice unto God; so it be with reverence. And even if lightness or pride should mix with their joy let us not strike at the joy itself, (this is the gift of God,) but at that lightness or pride, that the evil may cease and the good remain.

Q. 14. But ought we not to be *troubled* on account of the sinful nature which still remains in us?

A. It is good for us to have a deep sense of this, and to be much ashamed before the Lord. But this should only incite us the more earnestly to turn unto Christ every moment, and draw light, and life, and strength, from him, that we may go on, conquering and to conquer.

CONVERSATION VIII.

Q. 1. In what view may we and our *helpers* be considered?

A. Perhaps as extraordinary messengers, (i. e., out of the ordinary way,) designed,—1. To provoke the regular ministers to jealousy,—2. To supply their lack of service toward those who are perishing for lack of knowledge.

Q. 2. What is the office of *a helper?*

A. To feed and guide the flock: in particular,

1. To preach morning and evening.—2. To meet the society and bands weekly.—3. To meet the leaders weekly.

Q. 3. What are the rules of a helper in respect to his general conduct?

A. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed.

Be serious. Let your motto be, HOLINESS TO THE LORD! Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

Speak evil of no one; else *your* word, especially, would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned.

Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood, (if time permit,) or drawing water.

Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And, in general, do not *mend* our rules but *keep* them.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO BUT TO SAVE SOULS.* Therefore, spend and be spent in this work, And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.

Observe, it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance; and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.

CONVERSATION IX.

Q. What general method of employing our time would you advise us to?

A. We advise you,—1. As often as possible to rise at four.—2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read, partly the Scripture with the notes, partly the closely practical parts of what we have published.—3. From six in the morning till twelve, (allowing an hour for breakfast,) to read in order with much prayer, first, the Christian Library, and the other books which we have published in prose and verse; and *then*, those which we have recommended.

In the afternoon follow Mr. Baxter's plan; that is,—Go into *every house* in course, and teach *every one* therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly.

Make every particular plain to their understanding; fix it in

*This is the special duty and high privilege of an itinerant preacher among the Methodists. He does not receive support from the societies because he can preach better than those who are supported by their own labour, but because he is called out from all wordly avocations. Can such a man ever turn to them again, with a pure conscience, excepting only by the *visitation of God*, rendering it impossible for him to continue in his high calling?

their memory: write it in their heart. In order to this there must be 'line upon line, precept upon precept.' What patience, what love, what knowledge, is requisite for this!

CONVERSATION X.

Q. 1. Who is *the Assistant?**

A. That preacher in each circuit, who is appointed from time to time to take charge of the societies and the other preachers therein.

Q. 2. What is the business of an assistant?

A. 1. To see that the other preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing.—2. To visit the classes quarterly, regulate the bands, and deliver tickets.—3. To take in, or put out of, the society or the bands.—4. To keep watch-nights and love-feasts.—5. To hold quarterly-meetings, and therein diligently to inquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each society.—6. To overlook the accounts of all the stewards.

CONVERSATION XI.

Q. 1. Are we not *Dissenters?*

A. No. Although we call sinners to repentance *in all places* of God's dominion; and although we frequently use *extemporary prayer*, and unite together in *a religious society;* yet we are not *Dissenters* in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely those who renounce the service of the church. We do not, we dare not separate from it. We are not *Seceders*, nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles. The *Seceders* laid the very foundation of their work, in judging and condemning *others*. We laid the foundation of our work, in judging and condemning *ourselves*. They begin every where with shewing their hearers, how fallen the *church and ministers* are. We begin every where with showing our hearers how fallen they are *themselves*.

Q. 2. But what reasons are there, why we should not separate from the church?

A. Among others, those which are already printed, entitled, "Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England."

* By the *assistant* was meant the chief preacher in a circuit, who immediately *assisted* Mr. Wesley in the regulation of the societies. The preacher who has now the care of the circuit, is called *the superintendent*.

We allow two exceptions,—1. If the parish minister be a notoriously wicked man.—2. If he preach Socinianism, Arianism, or any other essentially false doctrine.*

CONVERSATION XII.

Q. 1. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

A. Inquire,—1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?—2. Have they *gifts*, as well as *grace*, for the work? Have they in some tolerable degree a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?—3. Have they *fruit?* Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof, that he is "moved thereto by the Holy Ghost."

Q. 2. What method may we use in receiving a new helper?

A. A proper time for doing this is at a Conference after solemn fasting and prayer. Every person proposed is then to be present; and each of them may be asked,

Have *you* faith in Christ? Are you *going on to perfection?* Do you expect to be *perfected in love in this life?* Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to his work? Have you considered the rules of *a helper?* Will you keep them for conscience sake? Are you determined to employ ALL your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning and evening? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting both by precept and example?

We may then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the Minutes of the Conference inscribed thus:

To "A. B. You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow labourer."

* Yet even this kind of partial separation was not to extend to a separation from the church in general.

Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein, that if he has any doubt it may be removed.

When he has been on trial four years, if recommended by the assistant, he may be received into full connexion.

It may be useful to add a few remarks on the method pursued in the choice of the itinerant preachers, as many have formed the most erroneous ideas on the subject, imagining they are employed with hardly any preparation; while others have seemed to think they are a distinct race from those to whom they minister.—1. They are received, in common with all other persons, merely as private members on trial.—2. After a quarter of a year if they are found walking according to the gospel, they are admitted as proper members.—3. When the grace and abilities of any members are sufficiently manifest they are appointed leaders of classes.—4. If they then appear to be called to more important services they are employed to exhort occasionally in the smaller congregations.—5. If approved in this line of duty they are allowed to preach.—6. Out of these men, who are called *local preachers*, are selected the *itinerant preachers*, who are first proposed in the quarterly meetings of the circuits to which they belong, secondly in the district meeting, and lastly in the conference; and if accepted are appointed to circuits.—7. Their characters and conduct are examined annually in the district meetings and in the conference; and if they continue faithful for four years of trial they are received into full connexion. At these conferences also strict inquiry is made into the conduct of every itinerant.—The preachers assembled are thus, from their identity of interest with the great body of the people, and their mutual sympathy with the whole, their natural and only entire representatives in all those affairs to which the conference directs its cares;—united with the whole connexion, as that in which they have resolved to live and die; and yet, because of their itinerancy, never so connected with any individual society as to become the organs of those changes and innovations which in particular places might be often advocated.—Sufficiently dependant to be one with their people; but sufficiently distinct, in order and office, to be the effectual guardians of that which has been committed to their trust, as

those who must give the *final* account of their stewardship not to man but to God. By them only can the discipline of the connexion in its wide extent be maintained; and the Lord and his people require it at their hands.

Mr. Wesley's great love of exactness and order was now abundantly gratified. In every place where he or the preachers in connexion with him laboured the same rules were observed in the formation and government of the societies. From this time the work of reformation and of true religion went forward with a regularity and sameness highly characteristic of the true gospel of God our Saviour.

In the tumultuous years of forty-five and forty-six, during the Rebellion, the work of God spread with great rapidity. The Scriptures declare, 'When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth the nations will learn righteousness.' The ministers of God went through the land calling upon sinners to repent; and many had ears to hear 'the things that are for their peace.'

At this time all denominations of people were addressing the king, and testifying their attachment to the august family that now fills the throne. Mr. Wesley and those in connexion with him, testified this with every breath they drew: but he was unwilling to address his majesty, lest his societies should be considered as a separate body. Yet he at length yielded so far to importunity as to draw up the following address; which however, from the before-mentioned motive, on further consideration he did not present. The thoughts and style of a man of God may be easily seen therein, rather than the laboured eloquence so common upon such occasions.

"TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

"The humble Address of the Societies in England and Wales, called METHODISTS.

"*Most gracious Sovereign,*

"So inconsiderable as we are, 'a people scattered and peeled and trodden under foot, from the beginning hitherto,' we should in no wise have presumed, even on this great occasion, to open our lips to your majesty, had we not been induced, indeed constrained so to do, by two considerations: the one, that in spite of all our remonstrances on that head, we

are continually represented as a peculiar sect of men, separating ourselves from the established church; the other, that we are still traduced as inclined to Popery, and consequently disaffected to your majesty.

"Upon these considerations we think it incumbent upon us, if we must stand as a distinct body from our brethren, to tender for ourselves our most dutiful regards to your sacred majesty; and to declare in the presence of him we serve, the King of kings and Lord of lords, that we are a part, however mean, of that Protestant church established in these kingdoms; that we unite together for this and no other end, to promote so far as we may be capable, justice, mercy, and truth, the glory of God and peace and good will among men; that we detest and abhor the fundamental doctrines of the church of Rome, and are steadily attached to your majesty's royal person and illustrious house.

"We cannot indeed, say or do either more or less than we apprehend consistent with the written word of God. But we are ready to obey your majesty to the uttermost in all things which we conceive to be agreeable thereto. And we earnestly exhort all with whom we converse, as they 'fear God,' to 'honour the king.' We of the clergy in particular, put all men in mind to revere the higher powers as of God; and continually declare, 'ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.'

"Silver and gold, most of us must own, we have none. But such as we have we humbly beg your majesty to accept, together with our hearts and prayers. May he who hath bought us with his blood, the Prince of all the kings of the earth, fight against all the enemies of your majesty, with the two-edged sword that 'cometh out of his mouth! And when he calleth your majesty from this throne, full of years and victories, may it be with that voice, 'Come, receive the kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the world!'

"These are the continual prayers of your majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects,

"JOHN WESLEY, &c."

Newcastle-upon-Tyne was a place of almost continual alarm during the troubles in Scotland. Here, therefore, Mr. Wesley

remained a considerable time; and his labour was not in vain. Many now learned truly to honour the king, (from the right principle, the fear of God,) who were before as reeds shaken with the wind. But his soul was grieved within him at the extreme ungodliness of those who were appointed to defend the land. He therefore wrote the following letter to one of the magistrates:

"SIR,—The fear of God, the love of my country, and the regard I have for his majesty king George, constrain me to write a few plain words to one who is no stranger to these principles of action.

"My soul has been pained day by day, even in walking the streets of Newcastle, at the senseless, shameless wickedness, the ignorant profaneness of the poor men to whom our lives are intrusted. The continual cursing and swearing, the wanton blasphemy of the soldiers in general, must needs be a torture to the sober ear whether of a Christian or an honest infidel. Can any that either fear God or love their neighbour hear this without concern? Especially if they consider the interest of our country, as well as of these unhappy men themselves? For can it be expected that God should be on their side who are daily affronting him to his face? And if God be not on their side how little will either their number, or courage, or strength, avail?

"Is there no man that careth for these souls? Doubtless there are some who ought so to do. But many of these, if I am rightly informed, receive large pay and do just nothing.

"I would to God it were in my power in any degree to supply their lack of service. I am ready to do what in me lies to call these poor sinners to repentance, once or twice a day, (while I remain in these parts,) at any hour or at any place. And I desire no pay at all for doing this, unless what my Lord shall give at his appearing.

"If it be objected, from our heathenish poet,

'This conscience will make cowards of us all:'

I answer, let us judge by matter of fact. Let either friends or enemies speak. Did those who feared God behave as cowards at Fontenoy? Did John Haime the dragoon betray any cowardice before or after his horse sunk under him? Or did William

Clements, when he received the first ball in his left and the second in his right arm? Or John Evans, when the cannon ball took off both his legs? Did he not call all about him, as long as he could speak, to praise and fear God, and honour the king? As one who feared nothing but lest his breath should be spent in vain?

"If it were objected, that I should only fill their heads with peculiar whims and notions! That might easily be known. Only let the officers hear with their own ears; and they may judge, whether I do not preach the plain principles of manly, rational religion.

"Having myself no knowledge of the general, I took the liberty to make this offer to you. I have no interest herein; but I should rejoice to serve, as I am able, my king and country If it be judged that this will be of no real service let the proposal die and be forgotten: But I beg you, sir, to believe that I have the same glorious cause, for which you have shown so becoming a zeal, earnestly at heart: and that therefore I am, with warm respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

A polite answer was returned by the magistrate; and the general being informed of it gave his consent; in consequence of which Mr. Wesley preached to the soldiers as long as he continued in those parts.

In the year 1745, Mr. C. Wesley confined his labours chiefly to London, Bristol, (including the neighbouring places,) and Wales.—He observes, August 1, "We began our conference, with Mr. Hodges, four of our assistants, Herbert Jenkins, and Mr. Gwynne. We continued it five days, and parted in great harmony and love."—On the 25th he was in Wales, and Mr. Gwynne sent his servant to show him the way to Garth; but having some time before sprained his leg, and having taken too much exercise after the accident, he was unable to go; and at length left Wales without visiting that family. The following is a remarkable instance of his zeal in doing good to the vilest and most wretched of human beings. "October 9.—After preaching at Bath, a woman desired to speak with me. She had been in our society, but left it through offence, and fell by little and little into the depth of vice and misery. I called Mrs. Naylor to hear her mournful account. She had lived some time in a

wicked house, in Avon-street; confessed it was hell to her to see our people pass by to the preaching; but knew not what to do, or how to escape. We bid her fly for her life, and not once look behind her. Mrs. Naylor kept her with herself till the morning, and then I carried her with us in the coach to London, and delivered her to the care of our sister Davey. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

February 3, 1746, Mr. C. Wesley opened the new chapel in Wapping, and preached from 1 Cor. xv, 1: 'Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.' The next day he wrote to a friend, expressing his apprehensions that God was about to pour out heavy judgments on the nation. He says to his friend, "You allow us one hundred years to fill up the measure of our iniquity; you cannot more laugh at my vain fear, than I at your vain confidence."—This and the preceding year were times of danger and great national alarm; and religious people are more apprehensive of divine judgments, at such seasons, than other persons. This has been falsely attributed to superstition; but religious persons have a more clear knowledge than others, of the enormity and guilt of national sins; they see more clearly the mercies enjoyed, and know more perfectly the holiness and just anger of God against sin. What might have been the visitation of God, if this revival of true religion had not taken place, may be easily imagined by those who believe his word.

Mr C. Wesley being at Bristol when he first heard the news of the victory at Culloden, over the rebel army, he observes, "I spoke at night on, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' We rejoiced unto him with reverence, and thankfully observed the remarkable answer of that petition,

All their strength o'erturn, o'erthrow,
Snap their spears and break their swords;
Let the daring rebels know,
The battle is the Lord's!*

"Oh that in this reprieve, before the tide is turned, we may know the time of our visitation."

* This is one stanza of his noble hymn, written at that awful time.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF RELIGION, WITH ITS ATTENDANT SUFFERINGS—MR. J. WESLEY'S EXPOSTULATION WITH THE OPPOSING CLERGY—HIS ADVICE TO THE PEOPLE RESPECTING THEIR PERSECUTORS.

THE Rebellion being now crushed, Mr. C. Wesley proceeded in 1746 to Cornwall, and was cheered by the steadiness of the flock there in those *troublous times*. The laymen were found useful on this occasion. He observes, "Monday, June 30.—Both sheep and shepherds had been scattered in the late cloudy day of persecution; but the Lord gathered them again, and kept them together by their own brethren; who began to exhort their companions, one or more in every society. No less than four have sprung up in Gwennup. I talked closely with each, and found no reason to doubt that God had used them thus far. I advised and charged them not to stretch themselves beyond their line, by speaking out of the society, or fancying themselves public teachers. If they keep within their bounds, as they promise, they may be useful in the church: and I would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets like these."—It is highly probable, England would have tasted before this time the horrors of the French Revolution, if it were not for this teaching. The common people were then ripe for any mischief. They are now taught better.

"July 3.—At Lidgeon, I preached Christ crucified, and spake with the classes, who seem much in earnest. Showed above a thousand sinners, at Sithney, the love and compassion of Jesus toward them. Many who came from Helstone, a town of rebels and persecutors, were struck and confessed their sins, and declared they would never more be found fighting against God. July 6. At Gwennup, near two thousand persons listened to those gracious words which proceeded out of *his* mouth, 'Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden,' &c. Half of them were from Redruth, which seems on the point of surrendering to the Prince of peace. The whole country finds the benefit of the

gospel. Hundreds, who follow not with us, have broken off their sins, and are outwardly reformed; and the persecutors in time past will not now suffer a word to be spoken against this way. Some of those who fell off in the late persecution, desired to be present at the society.

"At St. Ives no one offered to make the least disturbance: indeed the whole place is outwardly changed in this respect. I walk the streets with astonishment, scarcely believing it is St. Ives. All opposition falls before us, or rather is fallen, and not yet suffered to lift up its head again. This also hath the Lord wrought."

"July 19.—Rode to Sithney, where the word begins to take root. The rebels of Helstone threatened hard—they say all manner of evil of us. Papists we are, that is certain; and are for bringing in the Pretender. Nay, the vulgar are persuaded that I have brought him with me; and James Waller is the man! But law is to come from London to-night to put us all down and set *a price* upon my head."—This was an awful opinion to prevail among the fierce tinners of Cornwall. But he trusted in God and was protected. He observes, "We had notwithstanding a numerous congregation, and several of the persecutors. I declared my commission to 'open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light,' &c. Many appeared convinced, and caught in the gospel net."

The next day, being Sunday, Mr. C. Wesley preached again, and near one hundred of the fiercest rioters were present. A short time before, these men had cruelly beaten many, not sparing the women and children. But now, the very men, expecting a disturbance, came to protect Mr. C. Wesley, and said they would lose their lives in his defence. The whole congregation was attentive and quiet.

Thus, under the protection of a particular providence, of which he had no doubt, Mr. C. Wesley pursued his labours with great diligence, confidence, and success. He had been informed that the people of St. Just, being scattered by persecution, had wandered into the paths of error and sin, and had been confirmed therein by their exhorter. He visited them, and spake with each member of the society; and adds, "I was amazed to find them just the reverse of what they had been represented. Most of them had kept their first love, even while

men were riding over their heads, and while they were passing through fire and water. Their exhorter appears a solid humble Christian, raised up to stand in the gap, and keep the trembling sheep together." The next day he again talked with some of the society, and says, "I adored the miracle of grace which has kept these sheep in the midst of wolves. Well may the despisers behold and wonder. Here is a bush burning in the fire, yet not consumed! What have they not done to crush this rising sect; but lo! they prevail nothing! Neither persecutions nor threatening, flattery nor violence, dungeons nor sufferings of various kinds, can conquer them. Many waters cannot quench this little spark which the Lord hath kindled, neither shall the floods of persecution drown it."

The congregations had been large in most places, during his stay in the west of Cornwall; but it being generally known that he was now preparing to leave it they were greatly increased.—Sunday, August 10, being at Gwennup, he observes, "Nine or ten thousand, by computation, listened with all eagerness, while I 'commended them to God and to the word of his grace.' For near two hours I was enabled to preach 'repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' I broke out, again and again, into prayer and exhortation; believing not one word would return empty. Seventy years' sufferings would be overpaid, by one such opportunity Never had we so large an effusion of the Spirit as in the society; I could not doubt at that time either of their perseverance or my own; and still I am humbly confident that we shall stand together among 'the multitude which no man can number.'"

The next day, August 11, being filled with thankfulness to God for the mercies shown to himself and the people, he wrote a thanksgiving hymn, which begins thus,

All thanks be to God,
Who scatters abroad,
Throughout every place,
By the least of his servants, his savour of grace
Who the victory gave,
The praise let him have;
For the work he hath done,
All honour and glory to Jesus alone! &c.

He now travelled forward to St. Endys, and preached on 'Repent and believe the gospel.' His friends, the Rev. Messrs.

Bennet and Tomson, were present. "As I was concluding," says he, "a gentleman rode up to me very fiercely, and bid me come down. We exchanged a few words, and talked together more largely in the house. The poor drunken lawyer went away in as good a humour as he was then capable of. I had more difficulty to get clear of a different antagonist, one Adams, an old enthusiast, who travels through the land, as overseer of all the ministers."—Happy and wise, no doubt, in his own conceit.

Having received many letters from Mr. Kinsman's family, M. Jenkins, and others at Plymouth, importuning him to favour them with another visit on his return, he complied with their request on the 14th of August; and on the 18th he took boat at the Dock, accompanied by several friends, to meet a congregation at some distance. He observes, "The rough stormy sea tried our faith. None stirred, or we must have been overset. In two hours our invisible Pilot brought us safe to land, thankful for our deliverance, humbled for our littleness of faith, and more endeared to each other by our common danger. We found thousands waiting for the word of life. The Lord made it a channel of grace. I spoke and prayed alternately for two hours. The moonlight added to the solemnity. Our eyes overflowed with tears, and our hearts with love! Scarce a soul but was affected with grief or joy. We drank into one spirit, and were persuaded, that 'neither life nor death, things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

Mr. C. Wesley continued his labours daily, visiting various places in his way to Bristol, where he arrived on the 28th of August, and came safe to London on the 2d of September. He staid here a fortnight, during which he became acquainted with Mr. Edward Perronet, a sensible, pious, and amiable young man. Sept. 16, they set out, accompanied by several friends, to pay a visit to his father, the Rev. Mr. Perronet, vicar of Shoreham in Kent; a man of a most artless, childlike spirit, and zealous for the doctrines of the gospel. But his preaching and godly conversation had, as yet, but little influence on the minds of his people, who opposed the truth with great violence. It is probable notice had been given that Mr. C. Wesley would preach in the church. "As soon," says he, "as I began preaching

the wild beasts began roaring, stamping, blaspheming, ringing the bells, and turning the church into a bear-garden. I spoke on for half an hour, though only the nearest could hear. The rioters followed us to Mr. Perronet's house, raging, threatening, and throwing stones. Charles Perronet hung over me to intercept the blows. They continued their uproar after we got into the house."—Mr. C. Wesley retired for the present from the *beasts of the people*, and returned to London with Mr. E. Perronet.

October the 9th being appointed as a day of public thanksgiving for national mercies, the Foundery was filled at four in the morning. Mr. C. Wesley preached from those words, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?' He adds, "Our hearts were melted by the long-suffering love of God; whose power we found disposing us to the true thanksgiving." It was a day of solemn rejoicing. O that from this moment all our rebellions against God might cease!"

The winter was now approaching, yet Mr. C. Wesley, although in a poor state of health, determined to take his northern journey. October 10, he tells us, "I set out for Newcastle with my young companion and friend, E. Perronet, whose heart the Lord hath given me. His family has been kept from us so long by a mistaken notion that we were against the Church."—He visited the brethren in Staffordshire, and on the 15th preached at Tippen Green. After preaching in the evening a friend invited him to sleep at his house, at no great distance from the place. Soon after they were sat down the mob beset the house, and beating at the door demanded entrance. Mr. Wesley ordered the door to be set open, and the house was immediately filled. "I sat still," says he, "in the midst of them for half an hour. I was a little concerned for E. Perronet, lest such rough treatment, at his first setting out, should daunt him. But he abounded in valour, and was for reasoning with the wild beasts before they had spent any of their violence. He got a deal of abuse thereby, and not a little dirt, both of which he took very patiently. I had no design to preach; but being called upon by so unexpected a congregation, I rose at last and read, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory.' While I reasoned with them of judgment to

come they grew calmer by little and little. I then spake to them one by one till the Lord had disarmed them all. One who stood out the longest I held by the hand and urged the love of Christ crucified, till in spite of both his natural and diabolical courage he trembled like a leaf. I was constrained to break out in prayer for him. Our leopards were all become lambs, and very kind we all were at parting. Near midnight the house was clear and quiet. We gave thanks to God for our salvation, and slept in peace."—Such were the conflicts, and such the victories frequently obtained in that day.

October 21, Mr. C. Wesley preached at Dewsbury, where John Nelson had gathered many stray sheep and formed a society. The minister did not condemn them unheard, but talked with them, examined into the doctrine they had been taught, and its effects on their lives. When he found that as many as had been affected by the preaching, were evidently reformed, and brought to church and sacrament, he testified his approbation of the work, and rejoiced that sinners were converted to God. Had all the ministers of the established church acted with the same candour, they would have served the Church better, and the work would have been much more extended than we have yet seen it.

October 25. They arrived at Newcastle, where Mr. E. Perronet was immediately taken ill of the smallpox, and had a very narrow escape for his life.—October 31, Mr. Wesley observes, "I rode to Wickham, where the curate sent his love to me, with a message that he was glad of my coming, and obliged to me for endeavouring to do good among his people, for none wanted it more; and he heartily wished me good luck in the name of the Lord. He came with another clergyman, and staid both the preaching and the meeting of the society."

Mr. C. Wesley continued his labours in and about Newcastle till the 27th of November, when he rode to Hexham, at the pressing request of Mr. Wardrobe, a Dissenting minister, and others. He observes, "I walked directly to the market-place and called sinners to repentance. A multitude of them stood staring at me, but all quiet. The Lord opened my mouth, and they drew nearer and nearer: stole off their hats and listened: none offered to interrupt but one unfortunate squire, who could get no one to second him. His servants and the constables hid

themselves: one he found, and bid him go and take me down. The poor constable simply answered, 'Sir, I cannot have the face to do it, for what harm does he do?' Several Papists attended, and the church minister, who had refused me his pulpit with indignation. However, he came to hear with his own ears: I wish all who hang us first, would, like him, try us afterward.

"I walked back to Mr. Ord's through the people, who acknowledged, 'It is the truth and none can speak against it.' A constable followed and told me, 'Sir Edward Blacket orders you to *disperse* the town, (*depart*, I suppose he meant,) and not raise a disturbance here.'—I sent my respects to Sir Edward, and said, if he would give me leave, I would wait upon him and satisfy him. He soon returned with an answer, 'that Sir Edward would have nothing to say to me; but if I preached again and raised a disturbance, he would put the law in execution against me.'—I answered, that I was not conscious of breaking any law of God or man; but if I did I was ready to suffer the penalty: that, as I had not given notice of preaching again at the Cross, I should not preach again at that place, nor cause a disturbance any where. I charged the constable, a trembling, submissive soul, to assure his worship, that I reverenced him for his office sake. The only place I could get to preach in was a cockpit, and I expected Satan would come and fight me on his own ground. Squire Roberts, the justice's son, laboured hard to raise a mob, for which I was to be answerable; but the very boys ran away from him, when the poor squire would have persuaded them to go down to the cockpit and cry fire. I called, in words then first heard in that place, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' God struck the hard rock, and the waters gushed out. Never have I seen a people more desirous of knowing the truth, at the first hearing. I passed the evening in conference with Mr. Wardrobe. Oh that all our Dissenting ministers were like-minded, then would all dissensions cease for ever!—See the true catholic spirit of this high church-man!

"November 28, at six, we assembled again in our chapel, the cockpit. I imagined myself in the Pantheon, or some heathen temple, and almost scrupled preaching there at first; but we found 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' His presence consecrated the place. Never have I found a greater

sense of God than while we were repeating his own prayer. I set before their eyes Christ crucified. The rocks were melted and gracious tears flowed. We knew not how to part. I distributed some books among them, which they received with the utmost eagerness; begging me to come again and to send our preachers to them.' Does any one ask how Methodism has prospered? Behold the way! December 18, he says, "I waked between three and four in a temper of mind I have rarely felt on my birthday. My joy and thankfulness continued the whole day to my own astonishment."—This observation is truly evangelical. He only to whom 'there is no condemnation, being in Christ Jesus,' can bless the day when he was born!

Toward the end of December Mr. C. Wesley quitted the north and began to move southward. January 6, 1747, he came to Grimsby where he was saluted by a shouting mob. In the evening he attempted to preach at the room, but the mob was so violent he could not proceed. At length one of the rioters aimed a severe blow at him, which a friend who stood near received. Another of them cried out, "What, you dog, do you strike a clergyman?" and then fell upon his comrade. Immediately every man's hand was against his fellow: they began fighting and beating one another, till in a few minutes the room was cleared of all disturbers; when Mr. C. Wesley preached for half an hour without farther molestation. On the 9th, at Hainton, he talked separately with the members of the little society, who were as sheep encompassed with wolves. The minister of the place had repelled them from the sacrament, and laboured to stir up the whole town against them. It is probable they would have been worried to death but for the chief man of the place, a professed Papist, who hindered these good Protestants from destroying their innocent brethren.

Mr. C. Wesley returned to London; which he left on the 23d, and on the 24th he reached the Devizes in his way to Bristol, in company with Mr. Minton. They soon perceived that the enemies of religion had taken the alarm and were mustering their forces for the battle. They began by ringing the bells backward, and running to and fro in the streets as lions roaring for their prey. The curate's mob went in quest of Mr. C. Wesley to several places, particularly to Mr. Philips's, where it was expected he would preach. They broke open and ransacked

the house; but not finding him there they marched off to a Mr. Rogers's, where he and several others, being met together, were praying and exhorting one another to continue steadfast in the faith, and through much tribulation to enter the kingdom. The zealous curate, Mr. Innys, stood with the mob in the street, dancing for joy. "This," says Mr. C. Wesley, "is he who declared in the pulpit, as well as from house to house, 'That he himself heard me preach blasphemy before the university, and tell my hearers,—*If you do not receive the Holy Ghost while I breathe upon you ye are all damned!*' He had been about the town several days stirring up the people, and canvassing the gentry for their vote and interest; but could not raise a mob while my brother was here: the hour of darkness was not then fully come."

Mr. Innys, however, by assiduity, and falsehood boldly asserted as truth, now engaged some of the gentlemen of the town in his party, and prevailed with them to encourage the mob. While they beset the house where Mr. C. Wesley and the company with him were assembled, he often heard his own name mentioned, with, "Bring him out! Bring him out!" He observes, "The little flock were less afraid than I expected; only one of our sisters fainted away." It being now dark, the besiegers blocked up the door with a wagon, and set up lights, lest Mr C. Wesley should escape. One of the company, however, got out unobserved, and with much entreaty prevailed on the mayor to come down. He came with two constables, and threatened the rioters; but so gently that no one regarded him. Having torn down the shutters of the shop, and broken the windows, it is wonderful they did not enter the house: but a secret hand seemed to restrain them. After a while they hurried away to the inn, where the horses were put up, broke open the stable door, and turned out the beasts. "In the mean time," says Mr. C. Wesley, "we were at a loss what to do; when God put it into the heart of our next door neighbour, a Baptist, to take us through a passage into his own house, offer us his bed, and engage for our security. We accepted his kindness, and slept in peace.

"February 25.—A day never to be forgotten! At seven o'clock, I walked quietly to Mrs. Philips's and began preaching a little before the time appointed. For three quarters of an hour,

I invited a few listening sinners to Christ. Soon after, Satan's whole army assaulted the house. We sat in a little ground-room, and ordered all the doors to be thrown open. They brought a hand-engine, and began to play into the house. We kept our seats, and they rushed into the passage; just then Mr. Borough, the constable, came, and seizing the spout of the engine, carried it off. They swore if he did not deliver it they would pull down the house. At that time they might have taken us prisoners; we were close to them, and none to interpose; but they hurried out to fetch the larger engine. In the mean time we were advised to send for the mayor; but Mr. Mayor was gone out of town, in the sight of the people, which gave great encouragement to those who were already wrought up to a proper pitch by the curate and the gentlemen of the town; particularly Mr. Sutton and Mr. Willy, Dissenters, the two leading men. Mr. Sutton frequently came out to the mob to keep up their spirits. He sent word to Mrs. Philips, that if she did not turn that fellow out to the mob, he would send them to drag him out. Mr. Willy passed by again and again, assuring the rioters he would stand by them, and secure them against the law, do what they would."

The rioters "now therefore began playing the larger engine; which broke the windows, flooded the rooms, and spoiled the goods. We were withdrawn to a small upper room, in the back part of the house; seeing no way to escape their violence, as they seemed under the full power of the old murderer. They first laid hold on the man who kept the society-house, dragged him away, and threw him into the horse-pond.—We gave ourselves unto prayer, believing the Lord would deliver us; how, or when, we saw not; nor any possible way of escaping: we therefore stood still to see the salvation of God. Every now and then, some or other of our friends would venture to us; but they rather weakened our hands, so that we were forced to stop our ears, and look up. Among the rest, the mayor's maid came, and told us her mistress was in tears about me; and begged me to disguise myself in women's clothes and try to make my escape. Her heart had been turned toward us by the conversion of her son, just on the brink of ruin. God laid his hand on the poor prodigal, and instead of running to sea, he entered the society.—The rioters without continued playing their engine,

which diverted them for some time; but their number and fierceness still increased, and the *gentlemen* supplied them with pitchers of ale, as much as they would drink. They were now on the point of breaking in, when Mr. Borough thought of reading the Proclamation: he did so, at the hazard of his life. In less than the hour, of above a thousand wild beasts none were left but the guard, our constable, who had applied to Mr. Street, the only justice in the town; but he would not act. We found there was no help in man, which drove us closer to the Lord; and we prayed, with little intermission, the whole day."

The mob, however, rallied again, and Mr. C. Wesley observes, "Our enemies at their return made their main assault at the backdoor, swearing horribly they would have me if it cost them their lives. Many seeming accidents occurred to prevent their breaking in. The man of the house came home, and instead of turning me out as they expected, took part with us, and stemmed the tide for some time. They now got a notion that I had made my escape; and ran down to the inn, and played the engine there. They forced the innkeeper to turn out our horses, which he immediately sent to Mr. Clark's; which drew the rabble and their engine thither. But the resolute old man charged and presented his gun, till they retreated. Upon their revisiting us we stood in jeopardy every moment. Such threatenings, curses, and blasphemies, I have never heard. They seemed kept out by a continual miracle. I remembered the Roman senators sitting in the Forum, when the Gauls broke in upon them; but thought there was a fitter posture for Christians, and told my companion they should take us off our knees. We were kept from all hurry and discomposure of spirit by a divine power resting upon us. We prayed and conversed as freely as if we had been in the midst of our brethren; and had great confidence that the Lord would either deliver us *from* the danger, or *in* it. In the height of the storm, just when we were falling into the hands of the drunken enraged multitude, Mr. Minton was so little disturbed that he fell fast asleep.

"They were now close to us on every side, and over our heads untiling the roof. A ruffian cried out, 'Here they are behind the curtain.' At this time we fully expected their appearance, and retired to the furthermost corner of the room; and I said, '*This is the crisis!*' In that moment Jesus rebuked

the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. We heard not a breath without, and wondered what was become of them. The silence lasted for three quarters of an hour, before any one came near us; and we continued in mutual exhortation and prayer, looking for deliverance. I often told my companions, 'Now God is at work for us: he is contriving our escape: he can turn these leopards into lambs; can command the heathen to bring his children on their shoulders, and make our fiercest enemies the instruments of our deliverance.' About three o'clock, Mr. Clark knocked at the door, and brought with him the persecuting constable. He said, 'Sir, if you will promise never to preach here again, the gentlemen and I will engage to bring you safe out of town.'—My answer was, 'I shall promise no such thing. Setting aside my office, I will not give up my birthright as an Englishman, of visiting what place I please of his majesty's dominions.'—'Sir,' said the constable, 'we expect no such promise, that you will never come here again: only tell me, that it is not your *present* intention, that I may tell the gentlemen, who will then secure your quiet departure.'—I answered 'I cannot come again immediately, because I must return to London a week hence. But, *observe*, I make no promise of not preaching here; and do not you say that I do.'

"He went away with this answer, and we betook ourselves to prayer and thanksgiving. We perceived it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes. The hearts of our adversaries were turned. Whether pity for us, or fear for themselves, wrought strongest, God knoweth; probably the latter; for the mob were wrought up to such a pitch of fury, that their masters dreaded the consequence, and therefore went about appeasing the multitude, and charging them not to touch us in our departure.

"While the constable was gathering his *posse*, we got our things from Mr. Clark's and prepared to go forth. The whole multitude were without, expecting us, and saluted us with a general shout. Mr. Minton and I took horse in the face of our enemies, who began clamouring against us; the gentlemen were dispersed among the mob, to bridle them. We rode a slow pace up the street, the whole multitude pouring along on both sides, and attending us with loud acclamations;—such fierceness and diabolical malice I have not before seen in hu-

man faces. They ran up to our horses as if they would swallow us, but did not know which was Wesley. We felt great peace and acquiescence in the honour done us, while the whole town were spectators of our march. When out of sight we mended our pace, and about seven o'clock came to Wrexall. The news of our danger was got thither before us; but we brought the welcome tidings of our deliverance. We joined in hearty prayer to our Deliverer, singing the hymn beginning with

Worship, and thanks, and blessing,
And strength, ascribe to Jesus, &c.

"February 26.—I preached at Bath, and we rejoiced like men who take spoil. We continued our triumph at Bristol and reaped the fruit of our labours and sufferings." He had got among a people who had received the gospel 'not in word only, but in power.' He was now therefore in honour; but he passed *through* it also, and was soon called to encounter the storms of dishonour and danger in Ireland.

Mr. J. Wesley knowing that much of this opposition and brutal treatment was owing to the ignorance and prejudice of many of the clergy, and wishing to remove every ground of offence, he wrote a state of the case to a friend, which he afterward published.

"About seven years since, we began preaching inward present salvation, as attainable by faith alone. For preaching this doctrine we were forbidden to preach in most churches. We then preached in private houses; and when the houses could not contain the people, in the open air. For this many of the clergy preached or printed against us, as both heretics and schismatics. Persons who were convinced of sin begged us to advise them more particularly how to flee from the wrath to come. We desired them, being many, to come at one time, and we would endeavour it. For this we were represented, both from the pulpit and press, as introducing Popery, and raising sedition; yea all manner of evil was said both of us and of those who used to assemble with us. Finding that some of these *did* walk disorderly, we desired them not to come to us any more. And some of the others we desired to overlook the rest, that we might know whether they walked worthy of the gospel. Several of the clergy now stirred up the people to treat us as outlaws or

mad dogs. The people did so, both in Staffordshire, Cornwall, and many other places. And they do so still wherever they are not restrained by fear of the magistrates.

"Now what can *we* do, or what can *you* or our brethren do, toward healing this breach? Desire of *us* any thing which we can do with a safe conscience, and we will do it immediately. Will *you* meet us here? Will you do what we desire of you, so far as you can with a safe conscience?

"1. Do you desire us, To preach another, or to desist from preaching this doctrine? We cannot do this with a safe conscience.

"2. Do you desire us, To desist from preaching *in private houses, or in the open air?* As things are now circumstanced, this would be the same as desiring us not to preach at all.

"3. Do you desire us, Not to advise those who meet together for that purpose? To dissolve our societies? We cannot do this with a safe conscience; for we apprehend many souls would be lost thereby.

"4. Do you desire us, To advise them one by one? This is impossible because of their number.

"5. Do you desire us, To suffer those who walk disorderly still to mix with the rest? Neither can we do this with a safe conscience; for 'evil communications corrupt good manners.'

"6. Do you desire us, To discharge those *leaders*, as we term them who overlook the rest? This is, in effect, to suffer the disorderly walkers still to remain with the rest.

"Do you desire us, *lastly*, To behave with tenderness both to the characters and persons of our brethren the clergy? By the grace of God we can and will do this; as, indeed, we have done to this day.

"If you ask, What we desire of you to do? we answer, 1. We do not desire any of you to let us preach in your church, either if you believe us to preach false doctrine, or if you have the least scruple. But we desire any who believes us to preach true doctrine, and has no scruple in the matter, not to be either publicly or privately discouraged from inviting us to preach in his church.

"2. We do not desire that any who thinks it his duty to preach or print against us should refrain therefrom. But we desire that none will do this till he has calmly considered both

sides of the question; and that he would not condemn us unheard, but first read what we say in our own defence.

"3. We do not desire any favour if either Popery, sedition, or immorality, be proved against us. But we desire you would not credit, without proof, any of those senseless tales that pass current with the vulgar; that, if you do not credit them yourselves, you will not relate them to others; yea, that you will discountenance those who still retail them abroad.

"4. We do not desire any preferment, favour, or recommendation, from those that are in power either in church or state. But we desire, 1. That if any thing material be laid to our charge we may be permitted to answer for ourselves.—2. That you would hinder your dependants from stirring up the rabble against us, who are certainly not the proper judges in these matters; and 3. That you would effectually suppress and discountenance all riots and popular insurrections, which evidently strike at the root of all government, whether of church or state.

"Now these things you certainly can do, and that with a safe conscience. Therefore, till these things be done, the continuance of the breach, if there be any, is chargeable on you, and you only."

Soon after the publication of this statement Mr. Wesley was attacked by his brother-in-law, Mr. Hall, as being inconsistent; professing to continue in the church, yet allowing some things therein to be *indefensible*. Mr. Wesley replied, "You say, 'that we give up some things as *indefensible* which yet have the same law and authority as those we approve; such are many of the laws, customs, and practices, of the *ecclesiastical courts*.'—I answer, 1. We allow that *these* laws, customs, and practices, are *indefensible*. 2. That there are acts of parliament in *defence* of *them*, as well as of those we approve. But will you show us how it follows, 1. That *those* things and *these* stand or fall together? Or, 2. That we cannot *sincerely* plead for the one while we give up the other?

"Do you not here quite overlook one circumstance which might be a key to our whole behaviour? Namely, that we no more look upon these filthy abuses which *adhere* to our church as *part* of the building, than we look upon any filth which may *adhere* to the walls of Westminster Abbey as *part* of that structure.

"You think, 'we practise other things in *contradiction* to the *orders* of the church;' and this you judge to be 'a just exception to our *sincerity*.' I answer, 1. We will obey all the *laws of the church*, so far as we can with a safe conscience. 2. We will obey with the same restriction the bishops as executors of those *laws*. But their *bare will* we do not profess to obey at all.

"Is field-preaching contrary to any of these *laws?* We think not. Is the allowing lay-preachers? We are not clear that this is contrary to any such law. This therefore (be it right or wrong on other accounts) is no just exception against our sincerity.

"'The Rules of our Societies,' you say, 'is a discipline utterly *forbidden* by the *bishops*.' When did any bishop forbid this? Or by what *law?* We know not any such law. You add, 'the *allowing* (for we do not *require*) any to *communicate* at our chapels, is contrary to the *rubricks*.' I answer, which rubricks require any to communicate *only* at the parish church? We cannot find them. Consequently, neither is this any just exception against our sincerity."

At the close of this year, 1745, he makes the following reflections:—"All this year the work of God gradually increased in the southern counties, as well as in the north of England. Many were awakened in a very remarkable manner, many were converted to God. Many were enabled to testify, that 'the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.' Meantime we were in most places tolerably quiet, as to popular tumults." Where any thing of the kind appeared the magistrates usually interposed, as indeed it was their duty to do. And wherever the peace-officers do their duty no riot can long subsist. Feeling, however, for the people under his care, lest they should be discouraged and turned out of the way; or be overcome of the evil, and repay their adversaries in the same spirit, he published a small tract entitled, "*Advice to the People called Methodists*," from which I shall give a short extract.

"By *Methodists*," says Mr. Wesley, "I mean a people who profess to pursue (in whatsoever measure they have attained) holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God; who place religion in a uniform resemblance of the Great Object of it; more particu-

larly in justice, mercy, and truth, or universal love filling the heart, and governing the life. You, to whom I now speak, believe this love of human kind cannot spring but from the love of God; considered not only as your Father, but as the Father of the spirits of all flesh; yea, as the general Parent and Friend of all the families both of heaven and earth.

"This filial love you suppose only to flow from faith; and that this faith implies an evidence that God is merciful to me a sinner; that he is reconciled to me by the death of his Son, and now accepts me for his sake. You accordingly describe the faith of a real Christian as 'a sure trust and confidence (over and above his assent to the Sacred Writings,) which he hath in God, that his sins are forgiven; and that he is, through the merits of Christ, reconciled to the favour of God.' And you believe, farther, that both this faith and love are wrought in us by the inspiration or influence of the Holy Ghost.

"If you walk by this rule, continually endeavouring to know, and love, and resemble, and obey the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God of love, of pardoning mercy; and if, lastly, you unite together to encourage and help each other in thus working out your salvation, and for that end watch over one another in love, you are they whom I mean by Methodists.

"The *first* general *advice* which one who loves your souls would earnestly recommend to every one of you is, Consider, with deep and frequent attention, the peculiar circumstances wherein you stand.—One of these is, That you are a new people. Your name is new, (at least, as used in a religious sense,) not heard of till a few years ago, either in our own or any other nation. Your principles are new in this respect, that there is no other set of people among us, (and possibly not in the Christian world,) who hold them all in the same degree and connexion; who so strenuously and continually insist on the absolute necessity of universal holiness both in heart and life—of a peaceful, joyous love of God,—of a supernatural evidence of things not seen,—of an inward witness that we are the children of God,—and of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in order to any good thought, or word, or work. And perhaps there is no other set of people, (at least not visibly united together,) who lay so much and yet no more stress than you do, on recti-

tude of opinions, on outward modes of worship, and the use of those ordinances which you acknowledge to be of God; and yet do not condemn any man upon earth merely for thinking otherwise than you do,—much less to imagine that God condemns him for this if he be upright and sincere of heart.

"Your strictness of life, taking the whole of it together, may likewise be accounted new. I mean, your making it a rule to abstain from fashionable diversions; your plainness of dress; your manner of dealing in trade; your exactness in observing the Lord's day; your scrupulosity as to things that have not paid custom; your total abstinence from spirituous liquors (unless in cases of extreme necessity;) your rule, 'not to mention the fault of an absent person, in particular of ministers, or of those in authority,' may justly be termed new. For we do not find any body of people who insist on all these rules together.

"Consider these peculiar circumstances wherein you stand, and you will see the propriety of a *second advice* I would recommend to you: Do not imagine you can avoid giving offence; your very name renders this impossible. And as much offence as you give by your name, you will give still more by your principles. You will give offence to the bigots for opinions, modes of worship, and ordinances, by laying no more stress upon them; to the bigots against them, by laying so much; to men of form, by insisting so frequently and strongly on the inward power of religion; to moral men, (so called,) by declaring the absolute necessity of faith, in order to acceptance with God; to men of reason you will give offence, by talking of inspiration and receiving the Holy Ghost; to drunkards, sabbath-breakers, common swearers, and other open sinners, by refraining from their company, as well as by that disapprobation of their behaviour, which you will be often obliged to express. Either, therefore, you must consent to give up your principles, or your fond hope of pleasing men. What makes even your principles more offensive is, this uniting of yourselves together: union renders you more conspicuous, placing you more in the eye of men; and more dreadful to those of a fearful temper; and more odious to men of zeal, if their zeal be any other than fervent love to God and man. And the offence will sink the deeper, because you are gathered out of so many other congregations; for the warm men in each will not easily be convinced,

that you do not despise either them or their teachers; nay, will probably imagine that you utterly condemn them, as though they could not be saved.

"You cannot but expect, that the offence continually arising from such a variety of provocations, will gradually ripen into hatred, malice, and all other unkind tempers. And as they who are thus affected will not fail to represent you to others in the same light as you appear to them, sometimes as madmen and fools, sometimes as wicked men, fellows not fit to live upon the earth; the consequence, humanly speaking, must be, that together with your reputation, you will lose, 1. The love of your friends, relations, and acquaintances, even those who once loved you the most tenderly;—2. Your business; for many will employ you no longer, nor 'buy of such a one as you are;'—and, 3. In due time, (unless He who governs the world interpose,) your health, liberty, and life.

"What farther advice can be given to a person in such a situation? I cannot but advise you, *thirdly*, Consider deeply with yourself, 'Is the God whom I serve able to deliver me? I am not able to deliver myself out of these difficulties; much less am I able to bear them. I know not how to give up my reputation, my friends, my substance, my liberty, my life. Can God give me to rejoice in doing this? And may I depend upon him that he will? *Are the hairs of my head all numbered?* And does he never fail them that trust in him?'—Weigh this thoroughly; and if you can trust God with your all, then go on in the power of his might.

"I would earnestly advise you, *fourthly*, Keep in the very path wherein you now tread. Let this be your manly, noble, generous religion, equally remote from the meanness of superstition, (which places religion in doing what God hath not enjoined, or abstaining from what he hath not forbidden,) and from the unkindness of bigotry, (which confines our affection to our own party, sect, or opinion.) Above all, stand fast in obedient faith, faith in the God of pardoning mercy, in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'who hath loved you, and given himself for you.' Ascribe to him all the good you find in yourself; all your peace, and joy, and love; all your power to do and suffer his will, through the Spirit of the living God. Yet in the mean time carefully avoid enthusiasm: impute not

the dreams of men to the all-wise God; and expect neither light nor power from him but in the serious use of all the means he hath ordained.

"Condemn no man for not thinking as you think. Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself. Let every man use his own judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to God. Abhor every approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason or persuade a man into the truth, never attempt to force him into it. If love will not compel him to come, leave him to God, the Judge of all. Yet expect not that others will thus deal with you. No: some will endeavour to fright you out of your principles; some, to shame you into a more popular religion, to laugh and rally you out of your singularity: but from none of these will you be in so great danger as from those who assault you with quite different weapons, with softness, goodnature, and earnest professions of (perhaps real) goodwill. Here you are equally concerned to avoid the very appearance of anger, contempt, or unkindness, and to hold fast the whole truth of God both in principle and in practice. This indeed will be interpreted as unkindness. Your former acquaintance will look upon this, that you will not sin or trifle with them, as a plain proof of your coldness toward them; and this burden you must be content to bear: but labour to avoid all real unkindness, all disobliging words, or harshness of speech; all shyness or strangeness of behaviour; speak to them with all the tenderness and love, and behave with all the sweetness and courtesy you can; taking care not to give any needless offence to neighbour or stranger, friend or enemy.

"Perhaps on this very account, I might advise you, *fifthly*, Not to talk much of what you suffer; 'of the persecution you endured at such a time, and the wickedness of your persecutors.' Nothing more tends to exasperate them than this: and therefore, although there is a time when these things must be mentioned, yet it might be a general rule to do it as seldom as you can with a safe conscience. For, besides its tendency to inflame them, it has the appearance of evil, of ostentation, of magnifying yourselves. It also tends to puff you up with pride, and to make you think yourselves some great ones, as it certainly does to excite or increase in your heart illwill and all un-

kind tempers. It is at best loss of time; for instead of the wickedness of men you might be talking of the goodness of God. Would it not be far more profitable for your souls, instead of speaking against them to pray for them? To confirm your love toward those unhappy men whom you believe to be fighting against God, by crying mightily to him in their behalf, that he may open their eyes and change their hearts?

"I have now only to commend you to the care of Him who hath all power in heaven and in earth; beseeching him, that, in every circumstance of life, you may stand 'firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke:' desiring nothing on earth, 'accounting all things but dung and dross that you may win Christ;' and always remembering, 'It is the part of a good champion to be flayed alive, and to conquer.'"

CHAPTER IV.

MR. WESLEY'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH SOME EMINENT MEN, IN SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND—ROUGH SKETCH CONCERNING JUSTIFYING FAITH—OPENING OF KINGSWOOD SCHOOL.

Mr. Wesley and his brother were now much spoken of in Scotland; and a few of the most pious ministers there, though differing from the two brothers on some points of doctrine, yet rejoiced in the great revival of practical religion in England by their means.

Mr. James Robe, minister of Killsyth, having received from a friend some account of them, wrote as follows:—"I was much pleased with what you wrote to me of the Messrs. Wesleys. I rejoice that justification, the imputed righteousness of Jehovah our Righteousness, received by faith alone, and gospel holiness, are the subjects of their sermons; and the debated points (various sentiments about which are not inconsistent with saving faith and our acceptance with God) are laid aside. I embrace fellowship with them, and pray that the Lord of the vineyard may give them success in preaching the faith of Christ, so much needed in England. 'As many as be perfect, let them be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall

reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.' How good would it be for the Christian world, if this were believed, and regarded as the word of God! When the happy days upon the wing are come, so it will be; and in as far as any have really shared in the late revival, it is so with them in some good measure. I learned something new, as to the exhorters, from the account you gave of them. I look upon them as so many licensed probationers, or useful public teachers; which is the case of our probationers. It provides me with an answer to objections, besides that of the extraordinary circumstances of the Established Church. I beg you to salute the two brothers for me, much in the Lord. I wrote to my correspondents formerly, upon yours to me from Newcastle, that there were hopes of their joining in our concert for prayer and praise, for the revival of real Christianity. Now I can write that they have acceded; and I hope we shall expressly remember one another before the throne of grace."

Mr. James Erskine, who frequently in the course of this year (1745,) corresponded with Mr. Wesley, transmitted this part of Mr. Robe's letter to him; and with a liberality not common to Scotchmen at that time, he asks, "Are the points which give the different denominations to Christians, and from whence proceed separate communions, animosities, evilspeakings, surmises, and at least coolness of affection, aptness to misconstrue, slowness to think well of others, stiffness in one's own conceits, and overvaluing one's own opinion, &c. &c., are these points (at least among the far greater part of Protestants,) as important, as clearly revealed, and as essential, or as closely connected with the essentials of practical Christianity, as the 'loving of one another with a pure heart fervently, and not forsaking,' much less refusing, 'the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some was,' and now of almost all is?"—Every candid man will most certainly answer this question in the negative. And it requires no great degree of discernment to perceive that the narrow party spirit which prevails among most denominations of Christians with regard to communion and church fellowship, even where it is acknowledged that the essential doctrines of the gospel are held fast, is one grand hin-

derance of brotherly love, and of a more general diffusion of real experimental religion.

In the latter end of this year Mr. Wesley had expressed a desire to be useful to the Scots, and to preach the gospel in Scotland. His friend Mr. James Erskine wrote to him on the subject, and set before him some of the difficulties he would have to struggle with in the attempt. Mr. Erskine in his letter expresses an ardent wish for union and Christian fellowship among all those of different denominations and opinions, who love the Lord Jesus Christ. He reprobates the animosity and bigotry too prevalent among them under the specious name of zeal for the truth. He then sets before him some of the difficulties he would meet with in attempting to preach and form societies in Scotland: "You have," says he, "some sentiments and ways of speaking different from the generality, and almost from all the real Christians of the Presbyterian persuasion in Scotland, among whom, from my long acquaintance with my countrymen, I cannot help thinking are about five in six of the real Christians there. And to my great regret, of these worthy people I fear three out of five are wofully bigoted: a vice too natural to us Scots, from what our countryman George Buchanan wrote was our temper—*perfervidum Scotorum ingenium: 'The vehement temper of the Scots.'* And some of you English have as much of it as any Scot; but it is not so national with you as among the Scots. You would have the same prejudices to struggle with among the Presbyterians that Mr. Whitefield had, that is, that you are of the Church of England, and use the Liturgy. And you would have more because of the difference of sentiment and ways of speaking as to some doctrines, about which his opinions and expressions were the same as theirs: and though this might make you more acceptable to most of the Episcopal persuasion, yet your way of speaking of *Christian perfection*, and their regard for what they call church order and regularity, would make *them* fly from you; for which last the Presbyterians would not be so offended with you: and your urging so strict holiness in practice would recommend you to the Presbyterians, but I am afraid not to the Episcopalians. And your doctrine of man's utter ruin by the fall, and utter inability to do any thing for his own recovery; and the necessity of re-

generation, and an interest in Christ by faith alone that works by love and produces holiness in heart and life, &c., would be sweet to the Presbyterians, but not to many of the Episcopalians.

"Mr. Whitefield, in fewer months than one would have thought could have been done in as many years, overcame the prejudices of the far greater part of the Presbyterians, especially the most religious, only by preaching that faith and holiness you preach; by meddling with no debates, and by the power of the Lord signally accompanying his administrations; awakening, converting, and building up almost wherever he went, in places remote from one another. The same evangelical doctrine, of faith, holiness, regeneration, and divine influence, &c., and such blessed divine power on your administrations, managed with Christian prudence and simplicity, and that wisdom from above which is profitable to direct, would likewise overcome the strong prejudices against you and your brother.

"But Mr. Whitefield had one other advantage, which you would not have at present. The sermons and other things he had printed, were earnestly read by the Presbyterians, and were to their taste; as well as his sermons, conversations, and prayers, among them. And there is hardly any thing printed by your brother and you, in which I fear they would not find some thought or expression that would stumble and offend them." —Mr. Wesley, however, did not go to Scotland till some years after this period.

It was in this year also that Mr. Wesley began a private correspondence with a clergyman of considerable abilities, and probably of high station, if not the highest, in the church. He concealed his real name, and only said, as he lived at a considerable distance from London, a letter would find him, directed to John Smith, at Mr. Richard Mead's, the Golden-Cross, Cheapside. He introduced himself to Mr. Wesley in a very candid and liberal manner, and preserved candour and good temper through the greater part of their controversy. He introduces himself thus:

"Reverend Sir,

"The labouring to bring all the world to solid inward vital religion is a work so truly Christian and laudable that I shall ever highly esteem those who attempt this great work,

even though they should appear to me to be under some errors in doctrine, some mistakes in their conduct, and some excess in their zeal. You may therefore expect in me a candid adversary; a contender for truth, and not for victory; one who would be glad to convince you of any error which he apprehends himself to have discovered in you; but who would be abundantly more glad to be convinced of errors in himself. Now, the best way to enable you to set me right wherever I may be wrong, will be by pointing out to you what I have to object to those works of yours which have fallen into my hands; and, for order sake, I shall reduce my objections to matter of doctrine, to matter of phraseology, and to matter of fact."—He then mentions several particulars under the different heads, which he discusses with an open manly freedom and a good degree of ingenuity and ability. He concludes his first letter thus, "Having now freely told you what I take to be wrong in you, I shall readily and thankfully attend to whatever you shall point out amiss in me. I am desirous to retract and amend whatever is wrong. To your general design of promoting true religion I am a hearty friend; nay, to your particular scheme and singularities I am no enemy. If I come not fully into your scheme, it is not for want of goodwill, but for want of evidence and conviction that it is true. I pray God to grant me all needful illumination; and I pray you to tell me what is lacking on my part."

Mr. Wesley received and considered this letter with the same friendliness, and answered it with the same openness and candour. "I was determined," says he in his reply, "from the time I received yours, to answer it as soon as I should have opportunity. But it was the longer delayed, because I could not persuade myself to write at all till I had leisure to write fully. And this I hope to do now; though I know you not, not so much as your name. But I take it for granted you are a person that fears God, and that speaks the real sentiments of his heart. And on this supposition I shall speak without any suspicion or reserve.

"I am exceedingly obliged by the pains you have taken to point out to me what you think to be mistakes. It is a truly Christian attempt, an act of brotherly love, which I pray God to repay sevenfold into your bosom. Methinks I can scarce

look upon such a person, on one who is 'a contender for truth, and not for victory,' whatever opinion he may entertain of me, as an adversary at all. For what is friendship, if I am to account him mine enemy who endeavours to open my eyes or to mend my heart?" And in the conclusion of his letter he says, "Smite me friendly and reprove me: it shall be a precious balm; it shall not break my head. I am deeply convinced that I know nothing yet as I ought to know. Fourteen years ago I said with Mr. Norris,* 'I want heat more than light:' but now I know not which I want most. Perhaps God will enlighten me by your words. O speak and spare not. At least you will have the thanks and prayers of

"Your obliged and affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Dr. Whitehead observes, "John Smith, for so we must call him for the sake of distinction, prefaces his second letter in the following manner: 'I heartily thank you for your very kind and very handsome letter. I have yielded it that attention which I think it justly deserves; and am now sat down to give you my thoughts upon it. I shall first most readily take notice of those things wherein I stand corrected and am gone over to you: and next I shall, with some reluctance, proceed to those in which we seem unfortunately to differ.'—But though he yielded

* John Norris, the person here mentioned, was born in 1657, at Collingborne-Kingston, in Wiltshire, where his father was then minister. He was a learned divine and Platonic philosopher. He was educated first at Winchester school, and, in 1676, sent to Oxford. In 1680, he was elected Fellow of All-Souls soon after he had taken his degree of Bachelor of Arts. In 1684, he commenced Master of Arts; and the same year opened a correspondence with that learned mystic divine, Dr. Henry More, of Christ's college in Cambridge. He had also a correspondence with the learned Lady Masham, Dr. Cudworth's daughter, and the ingenious Mrs. Astel. In 1691, his distinguished merit procured him the rectory of Bemerton, near Sarum. This living, upward of two hundred pounds a year, was a comfortable provision for his family; and the easiness of the parochial duty gave him leisure to pursue his favourite studies. He died in 1711. Mr. Norris published two octavo volumes on "The Theory of the Ideal World." In this work he opposed Locke, and adorned Malebranche's opinion of *seeing all things in God*, with all the advantages of style and perspicuity of expression. His philosophical errors may easily be pardoned on account of the general excellence of his writings, especially on subjects of practical divinity, which are universally esteemed. Mr. Wesley published extracts from two of his works, "A Treatise on Christian Prudence," and "Reflections on the Conduct of Human Life." No person can read these without reaping advantage; and young persons ought to study them with diligence and attention.

up several things to Mr. Wesley, in whole or in part, yet he pressed him on one or two points of doctrine; and I think his objections had afterward some influence on Mr. Wesley's mind. There are six on each side written with ability and spirit. I think Mr. Wesley's opinions will admit of more illustrations and clearer evidence than he has given them in this controversy. He himself afterward stated some points to much greater advantage. I should, therefore, be sorry to see these letters published without occasional remarks by some person who thoroughly understands the subjects therein discussed."

I am ready to allow something of this, yet I cannot withhold these letters (for the recovery of which, I am indebted to my friend, Thomas Marriott, Esq.,) from the serious reader. The archbishop, for such it seems he was, certainly wrote more like a friend, and an inquirer after truth, than any other of Mr. Wesley's opponents; and the ability displayed is considerable. The correspondence being private also, and managed with less carefulness than it would have been if it had been intended for the public eye, is, I think, an advantage. Neither of the parties appears in his full polemic dress, and hence the characters of the men, as well as the truth contended for, are more clearly illustrated. I shall insert the whole in an appendix, at the close of this volume. It will give the serious reader a connected view of the principal controversies in which Mr. Wesley was engaged for several years. It is not my intention to make any remarks upon these letters. I am quite willing that the serious reader should draw his own conclusions. Mr. Wesley has often observed, how hard it is to prove any thing to the satisfaction of an *opponent*.

Mr. Wesley continued his labours through the most distant parts of the kingdom during the year 1746. Methodism spread rapidly on every side: the societies flourished, and the people increased in number, and in knowledge and love of the truth. At this period, the preachers were not skilled beyond the first principles of religion, and the practical consequences deducible from them; 'repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' and the fruits that follow, 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' These were the subjects of their daily discourses, and these truths they knew *in power*. But such was the low state of religious knowledge among the

people, that it was absolutely necessary to enforce these *first principles*, and to give them a practical influence on the heart and life, before they were led any farther. In these circumstances, the limited knowledge of the preachers was so far from being an inconvenience, that it was an unspeakable advantage; as it necessarily confined them to those fundamental points of experimental and practical religion, which were best adapted to the state of the people. Ministers of diversified knowledge, but of little experience in the work of the Spirit of God, seldom dwell sufficiently in their sermons on these important points; and hence the preachers were far more successful in awakening sinners to a sense of their dangerous state, and in bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ. To enforce the necessity of repentance, and of seeking salvation by grace alone through a Redeemer, the preacher would often draw a picture of human nature in such strong and natural colours, that every one who heard him saw his own likeness in it, and was ready to say, 'He hath shown me all that was in my heart!' The effect was surprising. The people found themselves, under every discourse, emerging out of the thickest darkness into a region of light; the blaze of which, being suddenly poured in upon them, gave exquisite pain at first, but soon showed them the way to peace and consolation. Mr. Wesley foresaw, that as knowledge was increased among the people, it ought to be increased in the same, or even in a greater, proportion among the preachers, otherwise they would become less useful. He therefore began to think of a collection of such books in the English language, as might forward their improvement in treating of the various branches of practical divinity. He seemed conscious that the plan of his own education, and the prejudices he had early imbibed against the non-conformists of the last century, had shut him out from the knowledge of many books which possibly might be very useful on this occasion.* This induced him to request Dr. Doddridge, with whom he had a friendly correspondence, to give him a list of such books as he might think proper for the improvement of young preachers.—March 15, 1746, the Doctor wrote to him, apologizing for the delay in complying with his request. "I am quite grieved," says he,

* He never saw even the account of his grandfather, John Wesley, by Calamy, till he met it by accident, at a friend's house, some years after he began his itinerancy.

"and ashamed, that any hurry, public or private, should have prevented my answering your very obliging letter from Newcastle; especially as it has a face of disrespect, where I am sure I ought to express the very reverse, if I would do justice either to you, or my own heart. But you have been used to forgive greater injuries.

"I have been reading (I will not pretend to tell you with what strong emotion) the fourth edition of your *Farther Appeals*: concerning which I shall only say, that I have written upon the titlepage, 'How forcible are right words!' I am daily hurried by my printer to finish the third volume of my *Family Expositor*. And I have, unwillingly, a secular affair on my hands, in consequence of a guardianship, which calls me away from my usual business for some days next week; on which account, I must beg your patience for a little while longer, as to the list of books you desire me to send you. But if God permit, you shall be sure to have it in a few weeks.

"I lately published a Thanksgiving Sermon, for the retreat of the rebels; which, if you think worth calling for at Mr. Waugh's, at the Turk's Head in Gracechurch-street, I shall desire you to accept. I was willing to greet the first openings of mercy; and so much the rather, as I think with Lord Somerville, who first made the reflection in one of his letters, that, had the blow at Falkirk been pursued, our whole army had been destroyed. The wisest and best of men, I know, agree to fear: oh that they could also agree in their efforts to save! I trust I can call God to record on my soul, that to bring sinners to believe in Christ, and universally to obey him from a principle of grateful love, is the reigning desire of my heart, and has been the main business of my life. But alas, that it is so unsuccessful a labour! Yet, God knows, that could I have foreseen only the tenth part of that little success I seem to have had, I would have preferred the ministry, with ten times the labours and sorrows I have gone through in it, to any other employment or situation in life. I shall not forget Colonel Gardiner's words, speaking of a much despised and persecuted, but very useful minister, 'I had rather be that man, than emperor of the world!'

"But I must conclude. May God, even your own God, continue to increase all his blessings on your head, heart, and la-

bours; and may he sometimes lead you to remember, in your prayers,

"Reverend and dear sir,
"Your affectionate brother and servant,
"P. DODDRIDGE.

"P. S. I presume, the list you desire is chiefly theological. Perhaps my desire of making it too particular has hindered me from setting about it till I had a leisure time, which I have not yet found. But under the impression your book made upon me I could not delay writing one post longer. Let me know in one word, how you do, what your success is, and what your apprehensions are. I fear we must have some hot flame to melt us."—The reader will recollect, that this letter was written in the time of the last rebellion, when the nation was thrown into the greatest consternation.

June 18, Dr. Doddridge sent the list of books, which Mr. Wesley had requested,* and the next day wrote to him as follows: "I send this by way of postscript, to thank you for the entertaining account you gave me of that very extraordinary turn which affairs took in the battle of Falkirk.—I perceive our rebel enemies were as confident of victory as possible, just before the action at Culloden, which proved so fatal to them. A friend of mine from thence brings word, that just as the armies joined; an officer was sent back to make proclamation at the market-cross, at Inverness, that every householder should bake a bushel of bread, that it might be ready to refresh the prince's victorious army on its return; which was required on pain of military execution. The consequence of this was, that our army found much better provision, for their refreshment after the fatigue of that glorious day, than they could otherwise have done. It is not to be wondered, that such a deliverance, after such circumstances as these, should make a strong impression on the mind of ministers and people in general, which I am assured it does. I heartily pray God the impression may be lasting, and produce that reformation which is so much needed among them as well as among us.

* The letter is too long to be inserted here: it is printed in the first volume of the Arminian Magazine. Mr. Wesley used it in compiling his *Christian Library;* a most valuable work, published in fifty volumes 12mo. It is now reprinting in octavo.

"I shall not be at all surprised if the next winter should open upon us a much more afflictive scene than the last, if we will not be reformed by such judgments and deliverances as these. Yet I think with you, dear sir, that God will not make a full end of us. I look upon every sinner converted from the error of his ways by the power of God working in his gospel, as a token for good that we shall not be utterly forsaken.

"I am, dear sir,

"Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

"P. DODDRIDGE."

In the latter end of December Mr. Wesley received the following observations in a letter from a friend. No doubt the writer thought them necessary at that time, and they will not be out of season at present. "The knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures of truth," says he, "I take to be of the last importance, and is what real Christians need as much to have their attention awakened unto, as the generality of those who are called by the Christian name need to be taught, that they are dead while they have a name to live.

"The understanding of the true meaning and intent of the Scriptures is understanding the mind of God in every place. And he who opens that does more, and, so to speak, gives more opportunity unto the Spirit of God to operate in the heart by his own word, than he who says abundance of serious things which are not contained in the subject (the text) he discourses from. In the other way a man may preach numbers of years unto a congregation, and never explain the direct meaning of the Holy Spirit in one scripture; meanwhile he is not increasing their knowledge in the word of God. The word of God is that by which the Holy Ghost influences the heart of a believer; and I cannot think it sufficient for the carrying on of that work that Christians be taught a few general truths, which possibly by frequent teaching they may acquire some distinct notion of, without ever seeing them in the scripture in their genuine beauty and dress. And do not all foolish and injudicious clamours about orthodoxy and heresy arise from this?

"I apprehend the Scriptures contain a more glorious, beautiful, and various display of the eternal God, than the inconceivable variety in nature gives us of this creation, which is his

work. And I would have all Christians search the Scriptures, and study God there with as much assiduity as the naturalists do nature in his material works. What infinite reward of enjoyment would arise from thence?—It is true, indeed, a head-knowledge* of these things is nothing. The Spirit of God must make the heart sensible of all that our understandings can comprehend in revelation. But these are two distinct things which God hath joined together: even as the power of God in raising up Christ from the dead, is one thing to be understood and believed from the Scriptures; and the quickening of a sinner, is a work actually performed in the heart by the Spirit of Christ, but is inseparable from the faith of the former. This is it which makes the understanding I speak of so necessary; for, without it, a person shall never be able to judge, by the word of God, of what passes within himself; for it is the only standard by which 'to try the spirits, and to prove every man's work.'

"Serious people are generally in danger of regarding only what they feel in themselves, when their affections are lively and they receive great consolation from a belief of the love of God in Christ. They take that for the knowledge of God which is only the effect of it. Consequently they are in hazard of seeking the knowledge of God in their own feelings, and of measuring their knowledge by them; not attending, that our nourishment is not from within ourselves, but comes from without. It is God's whole glory displayed in revelation, (by Christ,) communicated by the Holy Ghost, and received by faith, which ought to be the Christian's daily bread."

The gentleman who made these observations had mentioned his thoughts on the subject to Mr. Wesley in conversation, who desired him to put them down in writing more at length, which gave birth to the letter of which the above is an abstract.

Mr. Wesley continued his frequent visits to the most distant parts of the kingdom. No season of the year, no change of weather, could either prevent or retard his journeys. He generally preached two or three times every day, and regulated the societies wherever he came. His whole heart was in the work, and his fixed resolution surmounted every difficulty.

* The writer means speculative knowledge. It is a more proper word. Certainly, all the knowledge a man has is in his head. But speculative knowledge affects not the heart.

In February, 1747, being in Yorkshire, he met with a clergyman, who told him some of the preachers had frequently preached in his parish; and his judgment was, 1. That their preaching had done some good, but more harm. Because, 2. Those who had attended it had only turned from one wickedness to another; they had only exchanged sabbath-breaking, swearing, or drunkenness, for slandering, backbiting, and evilspeaking; and 3. Those who did not attend it were provoked hereby to return evil for evil. So that the former were, in effect, no better; the latter, worse than before.

"The same objection, in substance," says Mr. Wesley, "has been made in most other parts of England. It therefore deserves a serious answer, which will equally hold in all places. It is allowed, 1. That our preaching has done some good; common swearers, sabbath-breakers, drunkards, thieves, fornicators, having been reclaimed from those outward sins. But it is affirmed, 2. That it has done more harm; the persons so reclaimed only changing one wickedness for another; and their neighbours being so provoked thereby as to become worse than they were before.

"'Those who have left their outward sins,' you affirm, 'have only changed drunkenness or sabbath-breaking, for backbiting or evilspeaking.' I answer, If you affirm this of them all, it is notoriously false; many we can name, who left cursing, swearing, backbiting, drunkenness, and evilspeaking together, and who are, to this day, just as fearful, of slandering as they are of cursing or swearing. And if some are not yet enough aware of this snare of the devil, we may hope they will be ere long. Meantime bless God for what he has done, and pray that he would deliver them from this death also.

"You affirm farther, 'That their neighbours are provoked hereby to return evil for evil; and so while the former are no better, the latter are worse than they were before.'

"I answer, 1. 'These are worse than they were before.' But why? Because they do fresh 'despite to the Spirit of grace;' because they 'despise that longsuffering' love of God which would lead them, as it does their neighbours, to repentance.* And in laying the blame of this on those who will 'no

* 'The publicans and harlots,' says our Lord, 'repented at the preaching of John, and ye, when ye saw it, repented not afterward that ye might believe.'

longer run with them to the same excess of riot,' they only fulfil the Scriptures, and fill up the measure of their own iniquity.

"I answer, 2. There is still no proportion at all between the good on the one hand, and the harm on the other; for they who reject the goodness of God were servants of the devil before; and they are but servants of the devil still. But they who accept it are brought from the power of Satan to serve the living and true God."

In April, Mr. Wesley, on his return from the north, spent an hour with the same clergyman, and pressed him to make good his assertion, that the preaching of the Methodists had done more harm than good. This he did not choose to pursue; but enlarged on the harm it might occasion in succeeding generations. Mr. Wesley adds, "I cannot see the force of this argument. I dare not neglect the doing certain present good for fear of some probable ill consequences in the succeeding century."—Thanks be to God, those ill consequences have not yet appeared after more than seventy years' trial. The Lord still owns it to be his work.

June 4. Mr. Wesley wrote down the following instructions for the stewards of the society in London:

"1. You are to be men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom: that you may do all things in a manner acceptable to God. —2. You are to be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the society.— 3. You are to begin and end every meeting with earnest prayer to God for a blessing on all your undertakings.—4. You are to produce your accounts the first Tuesday in every month, that they may be transcribed into the leger.—5. You are to take it in turn, month by month, to be chairman. The chairman is to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them.—6. You are to do nothing without the consent of the minister, either actually had, or reasonably presumed.—7. You are to consider whenever you meet, 'God is here.' Therefore, be serious. Utter no trifling word Speak as in his presence, and to the glory of his great name. —8. When any thing is debated, let one at once stand up and speak, the rest giving attention. And let him speak just loud enough to be heard, in love and in the spirit of meekness.—9. You are continually to pray and endeavour that a holy harmony

of soul may in all things subsist among you: that, in every step, you may keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.—10. In all debates you are to watch over your spirits, avoiding, as fire, all clamour and contention: being 'swift to hear, slow to speak;' in honour every man preferring another before himself.—11. If you cannot relieve, do not grieve the poor. Give them soft words, if nothing else. Abstain from either sour looks or harsh words. Let them be glad to come, even though they should go empty away. Put yourselves in the place of every poor man; and deal with him as you would God should deal with you.

"These instructions, we whose names are underwritten, (being the present stewards of the society in London,) do heartily receive and earnestly desire to conform to. In witness whereof we have set our hands.

"N. B. If any steward shall break any of the preceding rules, after having been thrice admonished by the chairman, (whereof notice is to be immediately given to the minister,) he is no longer steward."*

I have already stated that the controversy with John Smith, so called, had some influence on Mr. Wesley's mind, especially in one particular. Hitherto he had expressed his notion of justifying faith, in the words of the Church of England, in her homily on Salvation. That it is "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God." He seems now to have examined the subject more closely, and wrote to his brother Charles as follows:

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Yesterday I was thinking on a *desideratum* among us, a *Genesis Problematica* on justifying faith. A skeleton of it (which you may fill up, or any one that has leisure,) I have roughly set down.

"Is justifying faith a sense of pardon? *Negatur.*†

"1. Every one is deeply concerned to understand this question well: but preachers most of all: lest they either make *them*

* All the class-money in London, which amounted to several hundred pounds a year, was at that time, and for more than 40 years after, given to the poor, through the hands of these stewards.

† It is denied.

sad *whom* God hath not made sad; or encourage them to say *peace* where there is no peace.

"Some years ago we heard nothing of justifying faith, or a sense of pardon; so that when we did hear of them the theme was quite new to us; and we might easily, especially in the heat and hurry of controversy, lean too much either to the one hand or to the other.

"2. By *justifying faith* I mean that faith which whosoever hath not is under the wrath and the curse of God. By *a sense of pardon* I mean a distinct explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven.

"I allow, 1. That there is such an *explicit assurance*. 2. That it is the common privilege of real Christians. 3. That it is the proper Christian faith, which '*purifieth the heart*' and '*overcometh the world.*'

"But I cannot allow that justifying faith is such an assurance, or *necessarily* connected therewith.

"3. Because, if justifying faith necessarily implies such an explicit assurance of pardon, then every one who has it not, and every one, so long as he has it not, is under the wrath and under the curse of God. But this is a supposition contrary to Scripture, as well as to experience.

"Contrary to Scripture; to Isaiah l, 10; 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.'

"Contrary to Acts x, 34; 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.'

"Contrary to experience: for J. R., &c. &c., had peace with God, no fear, no doubt, before they had that sense of pardon. And so have I frequently had.*

"Again. The assertion, 'that justifying faith is a sense of pardon,' is contrary to reason: it is flatly absurd. For how can a sense of our having received pardon, be the *condition* of our receiving it?

"4. If you object, 1. 'J. T., St. Paul, &c., had this sense:' I grant they had: but they were justified [or rather had justify-

* He means, before he heard of the "proper Christian faith," which he did not hear but from the Moravians.

ing faith] before they had it.—2. 'We know fifteen hundred persons who have this assurance.' Perhaps so: but this does not prove they had not justifying faith till they received it.—3. 'We have been exceedingly blessed in preaching this doctrine.' We have been blessed in preaching the great truths of the gospel; although we tacked to them, in the simplicity of our hearts, a proposition which was not true. 4. 'But does not our church give this account of justifying faith?' I am sure she does of *saving* or *Christian faith*: I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and to the testimony. All men may err: but the word of the Lord shall stand for ever."

Undoubtedly there are many in the same state in which Cornelius was in *Christian* lands, who never heard the proper Christian faith declared; and they are not under *the curse*. But they will be if they reject that faith when it is preached to them. If they embrace it the Holy Ghost, according to the promise, will assuredly bear witness to their *believing* and *pleading* spirits, as he did to the Ethiopian, (Acts ix,) and to Cornelius, (Acts x.)

On the 24th of June, 1748, Mr. Wesley opened his large school at Kingswood. He had long before built a small one for the children of the colliers, which still exists. The last was intended for the children of our principal friends, that they might receive a complete education in the languages and sciences, without endangering their morals in the great schools, where vice is so prevalent. In time, many of the preachers married and had families. Their little pittance was not sufficient to enable them to support their children at school. The uninterrupted duties of the itinerant life would not permit the father to give his son the necessary education he required: and it is well known how impossible it is, in general, for a mother to instruct, or even to govern a son after a given age, especially during the absence of the father. On these considerations, after a few years, the school was appropriated to the education of a considerable number of the preachers' sons, as well as of the children of private independent members. These were instructed, boarded and clothed; and the charity is supported by an annual collection made in all the chapels belonging to the societies in these kingdoms. The collection is now so increased that small sums are allowed out of it toward the education of preachers' daughters. Mr.

Wesley drew up a set of rules for this school, which have been highly admired by most that have seen them.

But this pious design, like all human institutions, often fell below the expectations of the benevolent founder. Yet, notwithstanding this, it has been productive of much good. Many useful preachers have been thereby preserved for the general work, and have been enabled to devote their whole life to the immediate service of God, who must otherwise have sunk under the weight of their families, and settled in some trade for their support. The school is now wholly appropriated to the sons of the itinerant preachers. The great increase of the work rendered this absolutely necessary. Another school has been opened in Yorkshire on the same plan, since the death of Mr. Wesley. The Lord has greatly blessed and prospered both these institutions.

A circumstance respecting the erection of this edifice deserves to be remembered. Mr. Wesley was mentioning to a lady, with whom he was in company in the neighbourhood of Bristol, his desire and design of erecting a Christian school, such as would not disgrace the apostolic age. The lady was so pleased with his views, that she immediately went to her scrutoire, and brought him five hundred pounds in bank notes, desiring him to accept of them, and to enter upon his plan immediately. He did so. Afterward being in company with the same lady, she inquired how the building went on; and whether he stood in need of farther assistance. He informed her that he had laid out all the money he had received, and that he was three hundred pounds in debt; at the same time apologizing, and entreating her not to consider it as a concern of hers. But she immediately retired and brought him the sum he wanted.

THE LIFE

OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE LABOURS OF MR. WESLEY AND OF HIS BROTHER, MR. C. WESLEY, AND OF THE PREACHERS IN CONNEXION WITH THEM IN IRELAND, WITH THE PERSECUTIONS THAT FOLLOWED—MR. C. WESLEY'S MARRIAGE.

MR. WESLEY evidently seems to have had but one design from the commencement of his ministry, and which he invariably pursued till his spirit returned to God, viz., to be as useful as possible to his fellow creatures, especially with regard to the salvation of their souls. He therefore never said, upon any success which he met with, "It is enough." In this respect also he 'forgot the things behind and reached forth to those before.' The same he continually inculcated upon those who laboured with him. Accordingly one of the charges which he gave them at their admission, as I have already noted, was, "Observe! It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that 'holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.'"

Agreeably to this they have from the beginning gone from place to place; and having formed societies of 'those who turned to God,' (for they take charge of none else) they immediately visited new places, beginning to preach generally in the open air, on a horseblock, or on whatever offered. At length one of the preachers, a Mr. Williams, then zealous for God, crossed the channel and began to preach in Dublin. Multitudes flocked to hear; and for some time there was much disturb-

ance, chiefly though not wholly from the lower class, who are mostly Romanists. He soon formed a small society, several of whom were happy witnesses of the truth which they had heard, viz., That God does now also 'give the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins,' to those who repent and believe the gospel.

Mr. Williams wrote an account of his success to Mr. Wesley, who determined to visit Ireland immediately. Accordingly on Tuesday, August the 4th, 1747, he set out from Bristol, and passing through Wales arrived in Dublin on Sunday the 9th, about ten o'clock in the forenoon. A circumstance almost instantly occurred which he considered as 'a token for good.' I shall relate it in his own words:

"Soon after we landed hearing the bells ringing for church I went thither directly. Mr. Lunell, the chief member of the society, came to the quay just after I was gone, and left word at the house where our things were, 'He would call again at one.' He did so, and took us to his house. About three I wrote a line to the curate of St. Mary's; who sent me word, 'He should be glad of my assistance.' So I preached there (another gentleman reading prayers) to as gay and senseless a congregation as I ever saw After sermon Mr. R. thanked me very affectionately, and desired I would favour him with my company in the morning.

"Monday the 10th. I met the society at five, and at six preached on, 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' The room, large as it was, would not contain the people, who all seemed to taste the good word.

"Between eight and nine I went to Mr. R., the curate of St. Mary's. He professed abundance of goodwill, commended my sermon in strong terms, and begged he might see me again the next morning. But at the same time he expressed the most rooted prejudice against lay-preachers, or preaching out of a church; and said the archbishop of Dublin was resolved to suffer no such irregularities in his diocess.

"I went to our brethren, that we might pour out our souls before God. I then went straight to wait upon the archbishop myself; but he was gone out of town.

"In the afternoon a gentleman desired to speak with me. He was troubled that it was not with him as in times past. At

the age of fourteen the power of God came mightily upon him, constraining him to rise out of bed to pour out his prayers and tears, from a heart overflowed with love and joy in the Holy Ghost. For some months he scarce knew whether he was in the body, continually walking and talking with God. He has now an abiding peace; but cannot rest till the love of God again fills his heart."

The house then used for preaching was situate in Marlborough-street, and was originally designed for a Lutheran church. It contained about four hundred people; but four or five times the number might stand in the yard, which was very spacious. An immense multitude assembled there to hear him on Monday evening; among whom were many of the rich, and ministers of all denominations. He spoke strongly and closely on, 'The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe;' and observes, that no person seemed offended. All, for the present at least, seemed convinced that he 'spake as the oracles of God.'

The next day he waited on the archbishop. They conversed for two or three hours, in which time he answered an abundance of objections. He continued to preach morning and evening to large congregations, and had more and more reason to hope they would not all be unfruitful hearers.

Having examined the society, which then consisted of about two hundred and eighty members, and explained at large the rules, (already mentioned,) he sailed for England, leaving Mr. Williams and Mr. Trembath to take care of this little flock. Many of these, he observes, were strong in faith, and of an exceeding teachable spirit; and therefore, on this account, should be watched over with the more care, as being almost equally susceptible of good or ill impressions.—Soon after this he published an address to the Roman Catholics: a very small tract, but clearly stating the points wherein we agree, and wherein we differ; and equally conspicuous for argument and temper.

The society in Dublin enjoyed their sunshine but for a little time. A persecution commenced, on which Mr. Trembath, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, makes the following observations: "I believe this persecution was permitted for good, that we might not trust in an arm of flesh. We thought that the magistrates would do us justice; but in this we were disappointed. It like-

wise drives us all to prayer and watchfulness, and also causes us to love each other better than ever; so that we are like sheep driven by the wolf into the fold. When we went out we carried our lives in our hands; but all this did not hinder us once from meeting together at the usual hours. The society still increased, and those who had the root in themselves stood like marble pillars; and, by the grace of God, were resolved rather to die with Christ, than to deny him. All the city was in an uproar: some said, 'It is a shame; the men do no harm:' others said, 'The dogs deserve all to be hanged.' Blessed be God we walk unhurt in fire! Now we can literally say, we live by faith: and the less we have of human help the more we shall have of divine."

Mr. C. Wesley, meantime, continued his labours in Bristol, London, and the places adjacent, till August the 24th, when, at the request of his brother, he set out for Ireland, taking with him Mr. Charles Perronet, son of the venerable vicar of Shoreham, and brother of Mr. Edward Perronet already mentioned. On the 27th they reached Mr. Philips's, in Wales; and on the 28th, he observes in his journal, "Mr. Gwynne came to see me, with two of his family. My soul seemed pleased to take acquaintance with them. We rode to Maismynis church, where I preached, and Mr. Williams after me, in Welsh. I preached a fourth time, (the same day,) at Garth. The whole family received us as the messengers of God; and if such we are, they received him that sent us."

August 29. Mr. John Wesley, who had just arrived from Ireland, came to them at Garth. On the 30th Mr. Charles Wesley preached on a tombstone in Builth churchyard, and again in the afternoon: in the evening he preached at Garth, on the marks of the Messias, from Matthew xi, 5.—Sept. 3, their friends left them: on the 4th, early in the morning, Mr. C. Wesley and his companions set out for Holyhead, which place they reached the next day at seven in the morning, having travelled on horseback twenty-five hours.—Sunday, September 6, he sent an offer of his assistance to the minister, who was ready to beat the messenger. He preached, however, at the request of some gentlemen, who behaved with great propriety.—September the 9th, they reached Dublin in safety.

Dublin had long been remarkable for a bad police. Frequent

robberies, and sometimes murder, were committed in the streets at an early hour in the evening, with impunity. The Ormond and Liberty mob, (that is, the butchers of Ormond market, and the weavers of the Liberty, a part of Dublin so called,) would sometimes meet, and fight till one or more persons were killed. On one occasion the mob had beat a constable to death in the street, and hung the body up in triumph! There was no vigour in the magistrates, and their power was despised. It is no wonder that the Methodists, at their first coming, were roughly handled in such a place as this; but it is wonderful that they so soon got a firm footing, and passed through their sufferings with so little injury. On Mr. C. Wesley's arrival here, he observes, "The first news we heard was, that the little flock stands fast in the storm of persecution, which arose as soon as my brother left them. The Popish mob broke open their room, and destroyed all before them. Some of them are sent to Newgate; others bailed. What will be the event we know not, till we see whether the grand jury will find the bill."—He afterward informs us that the grand jury threw out the bill, and thus gave up the Methodists to the fury of a licentious Popish mob. He says, "God has called me to suffer affliction with his people. I began my ministry with, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,' &c.—September 10, I met the society, and the Lord knit our hearts together in love stronger than death. We both wept and rejoiced for the consolation. God hath sent me, I trust, to confirm these souls, and to keep them together in the present distress."

Mr. C. Wesley spent no time in idleness. He was daily employed in preaching, expounding, visiting the people, and praying with them.—September 20, after commending their cause to God, he went forth to the green adjoining to the barracks, believing the Lord would make bare his arm in their defence. He called, in his Master's name and words, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary,' &c. The number of hearers was very great, and a religious awe kept down all opposition. He spoke with great freedom to the poor Papists, and, like St. Paul at Athens, quoted their own authors to convince them, particularly Kempis and their Liturgy. None lifted up his voice or hand to oppose; all listened with strange attention, and many were in tears.

They expressed general satisfaction, especially the Papists, who now maintained that he was a good Catholic.

At this early period of the work, the two brothers and the preachers suffered great inconveniences at the places where they lodged, even in large towns; and it was worse in the country societies. The rooms also, where they assembled when they could not preach in the open air, began to be much too small for the number of people who attended. This being the present state of things in Dublin, Mr. Charles Wesley purchased a house in that part of the town called Dolphin's Barn. The whole ground-floor, which was a weaver's workshop, was forty-two feet long and twenty-four broad. This was to be turned into a preaching-house, and the preachers were to be accommodated in the rooms over it; but before he completed the purchase he wrote to his brother for his opinion on the matter. His letter is dated October 9; in which he says, one advantage of the house was, that they could go to it immediately; and then adds, "I must go there, or to some other lodgings, or take my flight: for here I can stay no longer. A family of squalling children, a landlady just ready to lie in, a maid who has no time to do the least thing for us, are some of our conveniences! Our two rooms for four people, (six, when J. Healy and Haughton come,) allow no opportunity for retirement. Charles and I groan for elbow-room in our press-bed; our diet answerable to our lodgings; no one to mend our clothes and stockings; no money to buy more. I marvel that we have stood our ground so long in these lamentable circumstances. It is well I could not foresee, while on your side of the water."—October 17, he observes, "I passed the day at the house we have purchased, in Dolphin's Barn, in writing and meditation. I could almost have set up my rest here: but I must not look for rest on this side eternity."

Mr. C. Wesley continued his labours in Dublin till February 9, 1748, when he took an excursion into the country. The few preachers who were in Ireland had already introduced the gospel into several country towns. Mr. C. Wesley came to Tyrrel's Pass, where he met a large and well-disposed congregation. "Few such feasts," says he, "have I had since I left England: it refreshed my body more than meat or drink. God has begun a great work here. The people of Tyrrel's Pass were wicked

to a proverb; swearers, drunkards, sabbath-breakers, thieves, &c., from time immemorial. But now the scene is changed; not an oath is heard, nor a drunkard seen among them; *aperto vivitur horto.** They are turned from darkness to light, and near one hundred are joined in society."

February 11. Mr. C. Wesley, J. Healy, and five others, set out for Athlone, where, it is probable, notice had been given of their coming. On the road some persons overtook them, running in great haste, and one horseman riding at full speed. It soon appeared that the Papists had laid a plan to do them some violent mischief, if not to murder them, at the instigation of their priest, Father Terril, who had sounded the alarm the Sunday before. They spoke of their designs with so much freedom, that a report of them reached Athlone, and a party of dragoons being quartered there, were ordered out to meet Mr. C. Wesley and his friends on the road, and to conduct them safe to the town. But of this they were ignorant; and being earlier than was expected, the Papists were not assembled in full force, nor did the dragoons meet them at that distance from the town which was intended. They rode on, suspecting nothing, till within about half a mile of Athlone, when, rising up a hill, several persons appeared at the top of it and bid them turn back. "We thought them in jest," says Mr. C. Wesley, "till the stones flew," one of which knocked Mr. J. Healy off his horse and laid him senseless on the ground; and it was with great difficulty the Papists were hindered from murdering him. The number of these barbarians was soon greatly increased; and, though the Protestants began to rise upon them, they kept their ground till the dragoons appeared, when they immediately fled. Mr. C. Wesley and his little company, their wounded friend having recovered his senses, were now conducted in safety to Athlone, where the soldiers flocked about them with great affection, and the whole town expressed the greatest indignation at the treatment they had met with. J. Healy was put under the care of a surgeon, and at length recovered of his wounds.

February 15, Mr. C. Wesley returned to Dublin, and continued his labours with great success, the society being greatly increased, and many testifying publicly that they had received

* They live in the open garden.

"Christ removes the flaming sword,
Calls us back, from Eden driven!"

'the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins,' under his word.—March 8, his brother, Mr. John Wesley, arrived from England, which gave him a release from his present situation. He did not, however, leave Dublin till the 20th, when he entered the packet-boat at two o'clock in the afternoon, and by three the next day reached Holyhead: from whence he wrote to his brother as follows:

"'Teneo te Italiam!
Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum.'*—

"In twenty-five hours exactly, as before, the Lord brought us hither. To describe our voyage were *renovare dolorem.*† But here we are, after all, God be praised, even God that heareth the prayer! Thanks, in the second place, to our praying brethren: the Lord return it into their bosom! But let them pray on for us, and we for them. And I pray the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to send down his blessing and his Spirit on all you who are now assembled together, and hear this read. Peace be unto you, even the peace that passeth all understanding. Look for it every moment! Receive it this —and go in peace to that heavenly country, whither we are hastening to meet you!"

Intending to visit Mr. Gwynne's family at Garth, in Wales, he took horse the next morning, and by three in the afternoon came to Baldon-Ferry. Here, he observes, "We over-filled the small old boat, so that *Gemuit sub pondere Cymba sutilis, et multam accepit rimosa paludem.*"‡—The wind being strong, and the waves high, in the middle of the channel his young horse took fright, and they had a very narrow escape from being overset. But a gracious Providence attended him; he came safe to land, and on the 25th in the evening, reached Garth; but great fatigue, bad weather, and continual pain, had so weakened him, that when he came into the house he fell down totally exhausted.

Mr. C. Wesley had already conceived a great regard for Mr. Gwynne's family, and particularly for Miss Sarah Gwynne. A kind of embryo intention of making proposals of marriage, had

* Do I embrace thee, my country! Through various perils, through such diversity of trials!

† To renew the suffering.

‡ The frail patched vessel groaned under the weight, and, being leaky, took in plenty of water.

dwelt in his mind for some time. He had mentioned it to his brother in Dublin, who neither opposed nor encouraged him in the matter. During his present stay at Garth, this intention ripened into more fixed resolution, but still he thought it necessary to take the advice of his friends. After he had been a short time in London he went to Shoreham, and opened all his heart to Mr. Perronet, who advised him to wait. Much prayer was made, and every prudential step was taken which his friends could suggest; and here the business rested for the present.*

August 13. Mr. C. Wesley arrived again in Dublin, and on the 17th set out on horseback for Cork which he reached on the 20th, notwithstanding the incessant rains, the badness of the roads, and wretched accommodations at the inns. The next day, being Sunday, he went out to the Marsh at five in the morning, and found a congregation of some thousand persons. He preached from, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer,' &c. They devoured every word with an eagerness beyond description. "Much good," he says, "has already been done in this place: outward wickedness has disappeared, and outward religion succeeded it. Swearing is seldom heard in the streets, and churches and altars are crowded, to the astonishment of our adversaries. Yet some of our clergy, and all the Catholic priests, take wretched pains to hinder their people from hearing us.

"At five in the evening I took the field again, and such a sight I have rarely seen. Thousands and thousands had been waiting some hours; Protestants and Papists, high and low. The Lord endued my soul and body also with much strength to enforce the faithful saying, 'That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' I cried after them for an hour to the utmost extent of my voice, yet without hoarseness or weariness. The Lord, I believe, hath much people in this city. Two hundred are already joined in a society. At present we pass through honour and good report. The chief persons of the town favour us: no wonder then that the common people are quiet. We pass and repass the streets, pursued only by their blessings. The same

* When Mr. Gwynne went first to meet him in Wales, he had a *mittimus* ready in his pocket to send him to jail. However, he thought it right to hear him first, when the Lord so changed his heart that he invited Mr. C. Wesley to his house, had him to preach in the church, and at length became his father-in-law.

favourable inclination is all round the country: wherever we go they receive us as angels of God. Were this to last I would escape for my life to America.*

"I designed to have met about two hundred persons, who have given me their names for the society; but such multitudes thronged into the house as occasioned great confusion. I perceived it was impracticable, as yet, to have a regular society. Here is, indeed, an open door; such as was never set before me till now: even at Newcastle the awakening was not so general. The congregation last Sunday was computed to be ten thousand. As yet there is no open opposition. The people have had the word two months, and it is not impossible but their love may last two months longer, before any number of them rise to tear us in pieces.

"I met a neighbouring justice of the peace, and had much serious conversation with him. He seems to have a great kindness for religion, and determined to use all his interest to promote it.—For an hour and a half I continued to call the poor blind beggars to Jesus: they begin to cry after him on every side, and we must expect to be rebuked for it.—Waited on the bishop at River's Town, and was received with great affability by himself and family. After dinner rode back to Cork, and drank tea with some well disposed Quakers, and borrowed a volume of their dying sayings: a standing testimony that the life and power of God was with them in the beginning, as it might be again were they humble enough to confess their want of it."

We have here an instance of true candour in Mr. C. Wesley.—The extravagant manner in which baptism and the Lord's supper were spoken of when the first Quakers appeared—the people being generally taught, at that time, that those who had been baptised and afterward received the sacrament, were true Christians, and had a sure title to eternal life—induced those zealous men to think that the most effectual way of resisting this delusion would be the totally laying aside these ordinances! Thus one extreme produced another, neither party being 'under the law to Christ.'

* Is then persecution, or even contempt, absolutely necessary? Must we always be helped to live to God by the sin of others? Rather is not this to be considered as the remains of his old mystic theology? *Aut pati, aut mori!*—(Let me suffer, or let me die!) A dread, however, of any thing that would soften his spirit and unfit him for his work was the ruling principle.

"August 27. I had much conversation with Mr. C., a sensible pious clergyman; one after my own heart in his love to our desolate mother. He is clear in the doctrine of faith, and gave a delightful account of the bishop.—Sometimes waiting on great men may do good, or prevent evil. But how dangerous the experiment! How apt to weaken our hands, and betray us into an undue deference and respect of persons! The Lord send to them by whom he will send; but hide me still in disgrace or obscurity!"

August 28. He went out about five miles from Cork, where, says he, "Justice P. received us, and used all his authority with others to do the same. He sent word to the Romish priest, that if he forbade his people from hearing us he would shut up his mass-house. Several of the poor Roman Catholics ventured to come, after the justice had assured them he would himself take off the curse their priest had laid upon them. I exhorted all alike to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.—I hastened back to the Marsh: on seeing the multitudes, I thought on those words of Prior; 'Then, of all these whom my dilated eye with labour sees, how few will own the messenger of God when the stream turns!' Now they all received me with inexpressible eagerness. I took occasion to vindicate the Methodists from the foulest slander—that they rail against the clergy. I enlarged on the respect due to them; prayed particularly for the bishop, and laid it on their consciences to make mention of them (the clergy) in all their prayers.

"August 29. I passed a useful hour with Mr. C. He rejoiced that I had preached in his parish last Sunday. If our brethren (the clergy) were like-minded, how might their hands be strengthened by us! But we must have patience, as he observed, till the thing speak for itself; and the mist of prejudice being removed, they see clearly that all our desire is the salvation of souls, and the establishment of the Church of England.

"September 1. I met the infant society for the first time in an old playhouse. Our Lord's presence consecrated the place. I explained the nature of Christian fellowship; and God knit our hearts together in the desire of knowing him. I spake with some who told me they had wronged their neighbours in time past, and now their conscience will not let them rest till they have made restitution. I bid them tell the persons injured, it

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was this preaching had compelled them to do justice. One poor wretch told me before his wife, that he had lived in drunkenness, adultery, and all the works of the devil, for twenty-one years: that he had beat her almost every day of that time, and never had any remorse till he heard us; but now he goes constantly to church, behaves lovingly to his wife, abhors the thing that is evil, especially his old sins. This is one instance out of many."

September 5. He observes, that the work now increased rapidly, one and another being frequently justified under the word. "Two," says he, "at the sacrament yesterday: two at the society. One overtook me going to the cathedral, and said, I have found something in the preaching, and cannot but think it is forgiveness. All the burden of my sins sunk away from off me in a moment. I can do nothing but pray, and cry *Glory be to God!* I have such a confidence in his love, as I never knew: I trample all sin and sorrow under my feet. I bid him watch and pray, and expect greater things than these.—Our old master, the world, begins to take it ill, that so many desert and clean escape its pollutions. Innumerable stories are invented to stop the work, or rather are repeated; for they are the same we have heard a thousand times, as the primitive Christians did before us."

Sept. 6. He rode to Kinsale, and at noon walked to the market-place. The windows were filled with spectators rather than hearers. Many wild-looking people stood with their hats on, in the street; and the boys were rude and noisy. Some well-dressed women stood behind him and listened. His text was, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind.' "I did," says he, "most earnestly invite them all to the *great supper*. It was fallow ground, yet the word was not all lost. Several settled into serious attention; others expressed their approbation; a few wept.—In the evening the multitude so trod on one another that it was some time before they could settle to hear. I received a blow with a stone on the side of my head, and called on the person to stand forth, and if I had done him any wrong to strike me again. This little circumstance increased their attention. I lifted up my voice like a trumpet, and showed the people their transgressions, and the way to be saved from

them. They received my saying and spake well of the truth. A sudden change was visible in their behaviour afterward, for God had touched their hearts. Even the Roman Catholics owned, 'None could find fault with what the man said.' A lady of the Romish church would have me to her house. She assured me the governor of the town, as soon as he heard of my coming, had issued orders that none should disturb me; that a gentleman who offered to insult me, would have been torn in pieces by the Roman Catholics had he not fled for it; and that the Catholics in general are my firm friends."—It is worth observing, that every denomination of Christians in Kinsale claimed him as their own. He tells us, "The Presbyterians say I am a Presbyterian; the people who go to Church, that I am a minister of theirs: and the Catholics are sure I am a good Catholic in my heart." This is good evidence that he confined himself, in his public discourses, to the essential doctrines of the Christian religion.

Mr. C. Wesley in his excursions from Cork, had already visited Bandon once or twice, where the word she spake had considerable effect. On his return at this time from Kinsale, a poor man and his wife from Bandon met him, and pressed him so earnestly to give them another visit that he could not resist their importunity. He went thither again, September the 12th, and the poor man and his wife soon found him out and took him to their house in triumph. The neighbours flocked in, and "We had, indeed," says Mr. C. Wesley, "a feast of love. A prodigal came, who had been a monster of wickedness for many years, but is now returned to his Father: so are many of the town, who were wicked to a proverb. In the evening I invited about four thousand sinners to *the great supper*. God hath given them the hearing ear. I went to Mrs. Jones's, a widow gentlewoman, who is determined to promote the work of God to the utmost of her power: all in the place seemed likeminded except the clergy! O why should they be the last to bring home their King! It grieved me to hear the poor encouragement given last Sunday to the crowds that flocked to church; which place some of them had not troubled for years before. We send them to church to hear ourselves railed at, and, what is far worse, the truth of God.

"Tuesday, Sept. 13. We parted, with many tears and mu-

tual blessings. I rode on to Kinsale. Here also the minister, Mr. P., instead of rejoicing to see so many publicans in the temple, entertained them with a railing accusation against me, as an impostor, an incendiary, and messenger of Satan. Strange justice! that Mr. P. should be voted a friend of the church, and I an enemy, who send hundreds into the church for him to drive them out again.

"September 16. The power of the Lord was present in the society at Cork: I marvel not that Satan hates it: we never meet but some or other is plucked out of his teeth. After a restless night of pain I rose to confer with those who desired it. A woman declared that the Lord had spoken peace to her trembling soul at the sacrament. Thomas Warburton asserted, that faith came to him by hearing; and that now he hates all sin with a perfect hatred, and could spend his whole life in prayer. Stephen Williams witnessed, 'Last night I found my heart burdened in your prayer; but I repeated after you till my speech was swallowed up. Then I felt myself, as it were, fainting, falling back, and sinking into destruction! when, on a sudden, I was lifted up, my heart lightened, my burden gone; and I saw all my sins, once so black, so many, all taken away. I am now afraid of neither death, devil, nor hell. I am happier than I can tell you. I know God has, for Christ's sake, forgiven me." Two others, in whom I found a real work of grace begun, were Papists till they heard the gospel, but are now reconciled to the church, even to the invisible church or communion of saints. A few of these lost sheep we pick up, but seldom speak of it, lest our good Protestants should stir up the Papists to tear us in pieces. At Mr. Rolf's, a pious Dissenter, I heard of the extreme bitterness of two of the ministers, who make it their business to go from house to house to set their people against the truth, threatening all who hear us with excommunication. So far beyond the Papists are these *moderate* men advanced in persecution!"—Mr. C. Wesley now quitted this part of the kingdom, and visiting several towns in his way back, he came safe to Dublin on the 27th of September.

October 8. He took his passage for England, and the next night landed at Holyhead. He wrote to a friend the following account of the dangers he had escaped:—"On Saturday evening at half past eight I entered the small boat, and we were

two hours in getting to the vessel. There was not then water to cross the bar; so we took our rest till eleven on Sunday morning. Then God sent us a fair wind, and we sailed smoothly before it five hours and a half. Toward evening the wind freshened upon us, and we had full enough of it. I was called to account for a bit of cake I had eat in the morning, and thrown into violent exercise. Up or down, in the cabin or on deck, made no difference; yet, in the midst of it, I perceived a distinct heavy concern, for I knew not what. It was now pitch dark, and no small tempest lay upon us. The captain had ordered in all the sails. I kept mostly upon deck till half past eight, when upon inquiry, he told me he expected to be in the harbour by nine: I answered, we would compound for ten. While we were talking, the mainsail, as I take it, got loose; at the same time the small boat, for want of fastening, fell out of its place. The master called all hands on deck, and thrust me down into the cabin; when, in a minute, we heard a cry above, 'We have lost the mast!' A passenger ran up, and brought us worse news, that it was not the mast but the poor master himself, whom I had scarcely left when the boat, as they supposed struck him and knocked him overboard. From that moment he was seen nor heard no more. My soul was bowed before the Lord. I kneeled down, and commended the departing spirit to his mercy in Christ Jesus. I adored his distinguishing goodness '*The one shall be taken and the other left.*' I thought of those lines of Young:

> No warning given! Unceremonious death!
> A sudden rush from life's meridian joys;
> A plunge opaque beyond conjecture!

The sailors were so confounded, they knew not what they did. The decks were strowed with sails; the wind shifting about the compass; we just on the shore, and the vessel driving where or how they knew not. One of our cabin passengers ran to the helm, and gave orders as captain till they had righted the ship. I ascribe it to our Invisible Pilot that we got safe to shore soon after ten. The storm was so high that we doubted whether any boat would venture to fetch us. At last one answered and came. I thought it safer to lie in the vessel; but one calling, 'Mr. Wesley! You must come,' I followed, and by

eleven o'clock found out my old lodgings at Robert Griffith's. —October 10, I blessed God that I did not stay in the vessel last night: a more tempestuous one I do not remember."

He now wrote the following thanksgiving hymn:

All praise to the Lord,
Who rules with a word
The untractable sea,
And limits its rage by his steadfast decree!
Whose providence binds
Or releases the winds,
And compels them again
At his beck to put on the invisible chain.

Even now he hath heard
Our cry, and appear'd
On the face of the deep,
And commanded the tempest its distance to keep:
His piloting hand
Hath brought us to land;
And, no longer distress'd,
We are joyful again in the haven to rest.

O that all men would raise
His tribute of praise,
His goodness declare,
And thankfully sing of his Fatherly care!
With rapture approve
His dealings of love,
And the wonders proclaim,
Perform'd by the virtue of Jesus's name.

Through Jesus alone
He delivers his own,
And a token doth send
That his love shall direct us, and save to the end:
With joy we embrace
The pledge of his grace,
In a moment outfly
These storms of affliction, and land in the sky.

At half past nine o'clock I took horse in a perfect hurricane, and was wet through in less than ten minutes; but I rode on, thankful that I was not at sea. Near five in the afternoon I entered the boat at Baldon Ferry, with a clergyman and others who crowded our small crazy vessel. The water was exceedingly rough, our horses frightened, and we looking to be overset every moment. The minister acknowledged he never was in the like danger. We were half drowned in the boat. I sat at the bottom with him and a woman who stuck very close to me,

so that my being able to swim would not have helped me: but the Lord was my support. I cried out to my brother clergyman, 'Fear not, Christian! the hairs of our head are all numbered!' Our trial lasted near half an hour when we landed, wet and weary, in the dark night. The minister was my guide to Carnarvon, and by the way entertained me with the praises of a preacher he had lately heard and talked with. He could say nothing against his preaching, but heartily wished him ordained. His name, he told me, was Howel Harris. He took me to his own inn, and at last found out who I was, which increased our intimacy."

Mr. C. Wesley pursued his journey to Garth, which place he reached October 13. Here he staid about a week, and on the 21st arrived safe in Bristol.

He now confined his labours in the gospel for some months to London, Bristol, and the neighbouring places, making an occasional excursion to Garth in Wales. April 9, 1749, he was married by his brother, at Garth, to Miss Sarah Gwynne, an agreeable young lady of good sense and piety. Mr. John Wesley observes, "It was a solemn day, such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage."

Mr. J. Wesley, accompanied by Messrs. Meriton and Swindells, arrived in Dublin in the spring of the year 1748, before his brother Charles sailed for England.* He no longer confined himself to the house, but preached on Oxmantown-Green adjoining the barrack. He preached also at Newgate; and after a few days spent in Dublin he visited many parts of the country. In several places he was constrained to preach in the open air, by reason of the multitude that attended. Many of the soldiers also, in every place, gladly heard the word, and forty troopers were at this time members of the society at Philipstown. In many of the towns in the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in some of Connaught, societies were formed which have increased continually since that time, and the members of which have adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour

* Nearly forty years ago that excellent man, Mr. Edwards of Bedfordbury, (Mr Fletcher's leader,) told me, that he and the other leaders in London lamented that Mr. Wesley and his brother should spend so much time in Ireland, and send so many preachers thither. Mr. Wesley replied, "Have patience, and Ireland will repay you."—"We could hardly think it," said the good man, "but when Mr. Walsh came, we saw that Mr. Wesley's faith was better than ours."

What he had to encounter, even when no violence was offered to him, we may learn from a passage in his Journal:

"Tuesday, May 3, 1748. I rode to Birr, twenty miles from Athlone; and the key of the sessions-house not being to be found, declared 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' in the street to a dull, rude, senseless multitude. Many laughed the greater part of the time. Some went away just in the middle of a sentence. And yet when one cried out, (a Carmelite friar, clerk to the priest,) 'You lie! you lie!' the zealous Protestants cried out, 'Knock him down!' and it was no sooner said than done. I saw some bustle, but knew not what was the matter till the whole was over."

But the Lord gave a balance to this contempt. For on the 10th, when he left Athlone, (which he visited after Birr,) he with much difficulty broke away from that "immeasurably loving people," (to use his own expression,) and not so soon as he imagined neither; for when he drew near to the turnpike, about a mile from the city, a multitude waited for him at the top of the hill. They fell back on each side to make him way, and then joined and closed him in. After singing two or three verses he put forward, when on a sudden he was surprised by such a cry of men, women, and children, as he had never heard before. "Yet a little while," said he, speaking of this interesting occurrence, "and we shall meet to part no more; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever."

On his return to Dublin he spent some days there previous to his departure for England. On one of these days, while he was preaching on the Green near the barrack, a man cried out "Aye, he is a Jesuit that's plain." To which a Popish priest, who happened to be near, replied, "No he is not. I would to God he was."

Soon after he sailed, the zealous mob, who for some time had greatly incommoded those who attended at the preaching-house in Marlborough-street, made an attack in form. They abused the preacher and the congregation in a very gross manner. They then pulled down the pulpit, and carrying it with the benches into the street, made a large fire of them, round which they shouted for several hours.

Those preachers who remained in the kingdom continued their labour with much success. Mr. Swindells visited Lime-

rick, one of the most considerable cities in the province of Munster. The Lord much blessed his labours there, so that a society was soon formed; and the religious impression was so great on the inhabitants in general, that Mr. Wesley observes, on his visit to this city the following year, that he found no opposition; but every one seemed to say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!'

But in Cork the scene was very different. For more than three months a riotous mob, headed by a ballad-singer whose name was Butler, had declared open war against these new reformers, and all who attended their preaching. To give a detail of their violence would be almost too shocking to human nature. They fell upon men and women, old and young, with clubs and swords, and beat and wounded them in a dreadful manner. But they were not content with thus abusing the people when attending the preaching. They surrounded their houses, wounded their customers, broke their windows, and threatened to pull their houses down, unless they would engage to leave this way! The common epithets used on those occasions by Butler and his party, were *heretic dogs* and *heretic b–tch–s:* and several even of the magistrates rather encouraged than strove to prevent these disorders.

A Mr. Jones, a considerable merchant, who was a member of the society, applied to the mayor, but could not obtain redress. The house of Mr. Sullivan being beset, and the mob beginning to pull it down, he applied to the mayor, who after much importunity came with him to the spot. When they were in the midst of the mob the mayor said aloud, "It is your own fault for entertaining those preachers: if you will turn them out of your house I will engage there shall be no harm done; but if you will not turn them out you must take what you get." On this the mob set up a huzza, and threw stones faster than before. Mr. Sullivan exclaimed, "This is fine usage under a Protestant government. If I had a priest saying mass in every room of it my house would not be touched." The mayor replied, "The priests are tolerated; but you are not. You talk too much: go in and shut up your doors." Seeing no remedy, he did so; and the mob continued breaking the windows, and throwing stones into the house till near twelve at night. A poor woman having expressed some concern at seeing Butler with his ballads

in one hand and a Bible in the other, out of which he preached—in *his* way, Mr. Sheriff Reily ordered his bailiff to carry her to bridewell, where she was confined for two days!

After this it was not for those who had any regard either for their persons or goods to oppose Mr. Butler. So the poor people patiently suffered whatever he or his mob thought proper to inflict upon them till the assizes drew on, at which time they doubted not to find a sufficient, though late relief.

Accordingly on August 19, 1749, twenty-eight depositions (from which the above facts are taken) were laid before the grand jury. But they did not find any one of these bills. Instead of this, they made that memorable presentment, which is worthy to be preserved in their records to all succeeding generations:

"We find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his majesty's peace, and we pray that he may be transported.

We find and present Thomas Williams, &c.

We find and present Robert Swindells, &c.

We find and present Jonathan Reeves, &c.

We find and present James Wheatley, &c.

We find and present John Larwood, &c.

We find and present Joseph M'Auliff, &c.

We find and present Charles Skelton, &c.

We find and present William Tooker, &c.

We find and present Daniel Sullivan, &c."

Butler and his mob were now in higher spirits than ever. They scoured the streets day and night; frequently hallooing as they went along, "Five pounds for a swaddler's* head;" Their chief declaring to them all, "He had full liberty now to do whatever he would."

In the midst of this brutality and injustice religion shed her cheering light, and diffused happiness almost at the gates of the city. At Rathcormick, within about twelve miles of Cork, the Rev. Mr. Lloyd, the rector, had received Mr. Wesley into his church, and sincerely strove to advance the good work in which he was engaged. A letter received from that gentle-

* A name first given to Mr. Cennick, from his preaching on those words, 'Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.'

man about this time, forms a striking contrast to the disorders I have been relating.

"REVEREND SIR,

"Your favour of the 15th instant, I received the 22d. I am more satisfied than ever, that you aim at nothing but what has an immediate tendency to the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

"I cannot help thinking that your design, considered in this light, (allowing even of some mistakes,) must be deemed very praiseworthy. As to myself, in particular, I must own it gives me infinite satisfaction to find that you have spoken to so good an effect in our town and neighbourhood. My church is more frequented than ever it was; and I have the pleasure of seeing a greater decency, and more of zeal and attention than I could have dared to promise myself: which has also this effect upon me, that I find myself better disposed than ever to distribute to those who attend my ministry such food as may yield them comfort here and happiness hereafter. I heartily wish this may continue, and that the people may not cool. If so, we may hope to see wickedness generally decline, and virtue and godliness take place. I see this work of yours, through God's blessing, thus successfully carried on, without any illwill or jealousy, and could wish that all the clergy were, in that respect, of the same mind with me.

"Your society here keeps up well; and is, I believe, considerably increased since you left it. I frequently attend the preaching; and though I am much reflected on for it, this does not in anywise discourage me. While I am conscious to myself that I do no harm I am careless of what men can say of me.

"Michael Poor, lately a Romanist, who is now of your society, read his recantation on Sunday last.—Pray let us know when you or your brother intend for this kingdom and town: for be sure none wish more sincerely to see and converse with you than I, who am sincerely,

"Reverend and dear sir,

"Your very affectionate brother and servant,

"RICHARD LLOYD.

"*Aug.* 21, 1749."

In consequence of the shameful refusal of justice above-mentioned, the rioters continued the same outrages during the great part of the following winter. At the Lent assizes, the preachers (who made up the whole number then travelling in the kingdom, or at least, as many of them as had ever been in Cork or its neighbourhood,) assembled at the house of Mr. Jones, and went from thence in a body to the court, accompanied by Mr. Jones and other reputable inhabitants. His majesty's judge behaved as became him. He inquired where were the persons *presented*. On their being pointed out to him, he was for some time visibly agitated and unable to proceed. He at length called for the evidence, on which Butler appeared. On his saying, in answer to the first question, that he was a ballad-singer, the judge desired him to withdraw, observing, "That it was a pity that he who was a vagabond by profession had not been *presented!*" No other person appearing, he turned to the preachers and said, "Gentlemen, there is no evidence against you; you may retire: I am sorry that you have been treated so very improperly. I hope the police of this city will be better attended to for the time to come."

It was now generally believed there would be no more riots in Cork. But the flame of persecution was not yet extinct. Mr. Wesley arrived in Ireland in the month of April, 1750; and having preached in Dublin and the intermediate places, he proceeded to Cork; and at the repeated invitation of Mr. Alderman Pembroke, came to his house. On the morrow, being the Lord's day, he went about eight o'clock to Hammond's Marsh, being informed that the usual place of preaching would by no means contain those who desired to hear. The congregation was large and attentive. A few of the rabble gathered at a distance; but by little and little they drew near, and mixed with the congregation: and he preached to as quiet and orderly an assembly as he could have met with in any church in England or Ireland.

In the afternoon, a report being spread abroad that the mayor designed to hinder his preaching on the Marsh in the evening, he desired Mr. Skelton and Mr. Jones to wait upon him and inquire concerning it. Mr. Skelton asked if Mr. Wesley's preaching there would be disagreeable to him? Adding, "Sir, if it is, Mr. Wesley will not do it."—He replied warmly, "Sir,

I'll have no mobbing."—Mr. Skelton said, "Sir, there was none this morning."—He answered, "There was. Are there not churches and meeting-houses enough? I will have no more mobs and riots."—Mr. Skelton replied, "Sir, neither Mr. Wesley, nor they that heard him, made either mobs or riots."—He then answered plainly, "I will have no more preaching; and if Mr. Wesley attempts to preach I am prepared for him."

He, however, began preaching in the house soon after five. Mr. Mayor in the mean time was walking in the exchange, and giving orders to the town drummers and to his sergeants—doubtless to go down and keep the peace! They accordingly came down to the house, with an innumerable mob attending them. They continued drumming, and Mr. Wesley continued preaching, till he had finished his discourse. When he came out the mob immediately closed him in. Observing one of the sergeants standing by, he desired him to keep the king's peace: but he replied, "Sir, I have no orders to do that." As soon as he came into the street the rabble threw whatever came to hand. But all went by him, or flew over his head; nor did one thing touch him. He walked on straight through the midst of the rabble, looking every man before him in the face; and they opened on the right and left till he came near Dant's Bridge. A large party had taken possession of this, one of whom was bawling out, "Now, hey, for the Romans!" When he came up *they* likewise shrunk back, and he walked through them to Mr. Jenkins's house. But a Romanist stood just within the door and endeavoured to hinder him from going in; till one of the mob, aiming at him, but missing, knocked down the Romanist. He then went in, and God restrained the wild beasts so that not one attempted to follow him.

But many of the congregation were more roughly handled; particularly Mr. Jones, who was covered with dirt, and escaped with his life almost by miracle. The main body of the mob then went to the house, brought out all the seats and benches, tore up the floor, the door, the frames of the windows, and whatever of wood-work remained; part of which they carried off for their own use, and the rest they burnt in the open street.

Finding there was no probability of their dispersing, Mr. Wesley sent to Alderman Pembroke, who immediately desired Mr. Alderman Winthrop, his nephew, to go down to him at Mr

Jenkins's; with whom they walked up the street, none giving him an unkind or disrespectful word.

Monday, 21. He rode on to Bandon. From three in the afternoon till past seven the mob of Cork marched in grand procession, and then burnt him in effigy near Dant's Bridge.

While they were so busily employed, Mr. Haughton, one of the preachers, took the opportunity of going down to Hammond's Marsh. He called at a friend's house there; where the good woman, in great care, locked him in. But observing many people were met, he threw up the sash and preached to them out of the window. Many seemed deeply affected, even of those who had been persecutors before; and they all quietly retired to their several homes before the mob was at leisure to attend them.

Tuesday, 22. The mob and drummers were moving again between three and four in the morning. The same evening they came down to the Marsh, but stood at a distance from Mr. Stockdale's house till the drums beat and the mayor's sergeant beckoned to them, on which they drew up and began the attack. The mayor being sent for, came with a party of soldiers, and said to the mob, "Lads, once, twice, thrice, I bid you go home. Now I have done." He then went back, taking the soldiers with him. On which the mob, pursuant to their instructions, went on and broke all the glass and most of the window-frames in pieces.

Wednesday, 23. The mob was still patrolling the street, abusing all that were called Methodists, and threatening to murder them and pull down their houses if they did not leave this way.

Thursday, 24. They again assaulted Mr. Stockdale's house, broke down the boards he had nailed up against the windows, destroyed what little remained of the window-frames and shutters, and damaged a considerable part of his goods.

Friday, 25. One Roger O'Farrel fixed up an advertisement at the public exchange, that he was ready to head any mob in order to pull down any house that should dare to harbour a Swaddler.

At this time Mr. Wesley enjoyed peace at Bandon, notwithstanding the unwearied labours, both public and private, of Dr. —— to stir up the people. But, on Saturday, many were under

great apprehensions of what was to be done in the evening. He began preaching in the main street at the usual hour, but to more than twice the usual congregation. After he had spoken about a quarter of an hour, a clergyman, who had planted himself near him with a very large stick in his hand, according to agreement, opened the scene. Indeed, his friends said, "He was in drink, or he would not have done it." But before he had uttered many words, two or three resolute women, by main strength, pulled him into a house, and after expostulating a little, sent him away through the garden. But here he fell violently on her that conducted him, not in anger, but love, (such as it was,) so that she was constrained to repel force by force, and cuff him soundly, before he would let her go.

The next champion that appeared was one Mr. M., a young gentleman of the town. He was attended by two others with pistols in their hands. But his triumph too was only short; for some of the people quickly bore him away, though with much gentleness and civility.

The third came on with far greater fury; but he was encountered by a butcher of the town, (not one of the society,) who used him as he would an ox, bestowing one or two hearty blows upon his head. This cooled his courage, especially as none took his part. So Mr. Wesley quietly finished his discourse.

Sunday, 27. At eight in the morning he was favoured with such a glorious shower as usually follows a storm. After the church service he began preaching again on, 'The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." In the evening a large multitude flocked together; such a congregation was probably never before seen in Bandon; and the fear of God was in the midst. A solemn awe seemed to run through the whole multitude while he enlarged on, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!'

In the midst of the above riots he wrote the following hymn; which is so excellent, and was so suitable to the time in which it was composed, that, though it is probably known to the majority of my readers, I cannot refrain from adorning this history with it; and more particularly, as it will give an admirable view of the spirit in which he bore this unjust and cruel treatment; as well as afford another instance of his genius for poetry, though he chose to give the laurel to his brother.

Ye simple souls that stray
Far from the path of peace,
(That unfrequented way
To life and happiness,)
How long will ye your folly love,
And throng the downward road,
And hate the wisdom from above,
And mock the sons of God?

Madness and misery
Ye count our life beneath;
And nothing great can see,
Or glorious in our death:
As born to suffer and to grieve,
Beneath your feet we lie,
And utterly contemn'd we live,
And unlamented die.

Poor pensive sojourners,
O'erwhelm'd with griefs and woes
Perplex'd with needless fears,
And pleasure's mortal foes;
More irksome than a gaping tomb,
Our sight ye cannot bear,
Wrapt in the melancholy gloom
Of fanciful despair.

So wretched and obscure
The men whom ye despise;
So foolish, weak, and poor,
Above your scorn we rise;
Our conscience in the Holy Ghost
Can witness better things;
For He whose blood is all our boast
Hath made us priests and kings.

Riches unsearchable
In Jesu's love we know;
And pleasures from the well
Of life our souls o'erflow.
From him the spirit we receive
Of wisdom, love, and power;
And always sorrowful we live,
Rejoicing evermore.

Angels our servants are,
And keep in all our ways,
And in their hands they bear
The sacred sons of grace:
Our guardians to that heavenly bliss,
They all our steps attend;
And God himself our Father is,
And Jesus is our Friend.

With him we walk in white,
We in his image shine;
Our robes are robes of light,
Our righteousness divine:
On all the grovelling kings of earth
With pity we look down,
And claim, in virtue of our birth,
A never-fading crown.*

Shortly after these riots in Cork, Butler went to Waterford and raised disturbances in that city. But happening to quarrel with some who were as ready to shed blood as himself, he lost his right arm in the fray. Being thus disabled the wretch dragged on the remainder of his life in unpitied misery. His fellow rioters at Cork were intimidated by the soldiers in garrison, many of whom began now to attend the preaching. At length peace was restored; and the next time Mr. Wesley visited that city he preached without disturbance. A large preaching-house was soon after built, in which the people quietly assembled.

There are few places where religion has prospered more than in Cork. 'Being reviled for the name of Christ, the Spirit of glory and of God has rested upon them:' and many have been the living and dying witnesses of the power of true religion. The principal inhabitants have been long convinced of the folly and wickedness of the authors and encouragers of those persecutions: and, on a late visit, the mayor invited Mr. Wesley to the mansion-house, and seemed to consider his company as an honour.

Several circuits were now formed. The preachers who came over with Mr. Wesley from time to time visited the societies regularly, and preached in new places as the way was opened for them. Several preachers were also raised up among the natives: men who, after they had found acceptance with God themselves, and seen the deplorable state of the people around them, had no rest till they declared the way of salvation. Some of these had been Romanists, and for many years depended for salvation on the pageantry and forms used by men as wicked as themselves. These were as flames of fire when they found the 'new and living way' of faith in Christ, and love to God and man. They

* It has been denied that Mr. John Wesley was the author of this hymn. I must still think that he was: I believe I was not misinformed. There is, I think, also some internal evidence. The hymn has the purity, strength, and sobriety of both the brothers; but it seems to want the poetical *vis animi* of Charles.

laboured and suffered, if by any means they might save souls from death.

The late Mr. Thomas Walsh was an eminent instance of this kind. His conversion was conspicuous; his communion with God was deep and solid, his learning considerable, and his labours and sufferings very great. I doubt not but a short extract from the journal of this man of God will be acceptable to my readers, especially as it clearly shows what the preachers of that day had to encounter in testifying the gospel of the grace of God.

"Thursday, January 4, 1750. With much weakness of body I preached this morning, and soon after set out for Roscrea. About a mile from the town I met a large company armed with clubs. Seventy-eight men were sworn upon the occasion. At the first sight of them I was a little daunted; but I prayed to the Lord for direction, and was strengthened. They compelled me to alight, saying, they would bring a minister of the church of England and a Romish priest to talk with me. I let them know I contended with no man concerning opinions, nor preached against any particular church, but against sin and wickedness in all. I said, supposing three persons among you of different denominations, (it may be a Churchman, a Quaker, and a Romanist,) sitting down and drinking to excess, begin to dispute, each affirming that his was the best religion; where is the religion of all these men? Surely they are without any, unless it be that of Belial. They are of their father the devil, while his works they do: and if they live and die in this condition, hell must be their eternal portion. This they could not gainsay.

"After some further discourse on the design of my coming to preach the gospel to them, and appealing to themselves concerning the necessity of it, their rage seemed a little abated. They then told me they would let me go, on condition that I would swear never more to come to Roscrea. But when I resolutely refused this, they consulted on rougher measures; and after much debate, were determined to put me into a well which they had prepared for that purpose. They hurried me away into the town, where I was surrounded as by so many human wolves. They held a consultation again, and resolved either to make me swear that I would never more come thither, or else to put me into the well. But I refused either to swear or

promise. Some then cried vehemently that I should go into the water, but others contradicted, and as positively said I should not.

"After some time the parish minister came, who behaved well, and desired I might be set at liberty. They consented, provided I would go out of town immediately. From an inn where they had confined me they brought me out into the street, and it being market-day, I began to preach to the people. But seizing me by the coat they hurried me before them out of the town. At length I got on horseback, and taking off my hat I prayed for them some considerable time. I then called upon them in the name of God, for Christ's sake, to repent; and told them, as to myself, in the cause of God I feared neither devils nor men; that to do their souls good was my sole motive of coming among them; and that if God permitted, they might put me into the well, or even stone me; that be it how it would I was content.

"I came off from them at length in peace of conscience and serenity of mind. From the first to the last I was not the least disturbed, nor felt anger or malice toward them. O God, it is thou alone that hast wrought this deliverance for me, in restraining the malice of men and devils, not suffering them to hurt me when they rose up against me! Therefore, with angels and archangels I laud and magnify thy holy name, thy tender mercy and paternal affection toward me, O holy Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!"

Mr. Walsh preached with great success in many parts of Ireland and England. But his soul chiefly mourned over the poor ignorant people of that communion which he had renounced. For their sakes he often preached in Irish, which he perfectly understood; and many of them were thereby turned to God. But, as one observes, his soul was too large for his body. At the age of twenty-eight he died an old man, being worn out by his great and uninterrupted labours.

Mr. Walsh was the first who preached from the *pulpit* in London. Before that time the preachers had addressed the congregation from the reading-desk. When Mr. Walsh came he walked up into the pulpit, taking no notice of the custom. The solemnity of his manner, and the mighty force of his preaching, awed the congregation in an uncommon degree. From that time the preachers ascended the London pulpits, no man forbidding them.

CHAPTER II.

MR. WESLEY'S LABOURS AND PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPES.—HIS OPINION OF THE MONTANISTS.—DEATH OF MR. JANE.—HIS PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.—FALL OF WHEATLEY, AND RENEWED LABOURS OF MR. C. WESLEY.

MR. WESLEY continued his labours without intermission. He generally preached three or four, and sometimes five times in the day; and often rode thirty or forty, sometimes fifty miles. Thus did he labour while he could ride on horseback; nor do we believe there could be an instance found, during the space of forty years, wherein the severest weather hindered him for one day!

Many were the "hair-breadth escapes" which he experienced during that time, and which he has noted in his journals with lively gratitude to Him who numbers the hairs of our head. In this year (1750) he records a remarkable one.

"I took horse," says he, "in Bristol for Wick, where I had appointed to preach at three in the afternoon. I was riding by the wall through St. Nicholas' gate, (my horse having been brought to the house where I dined,) just as a cart turned short from St. Nicholas-street and came swiftly down the hill. There was just room to pass between the wheel of it and the wall; but that space was taken up by the cartman. I called to him to go back, or I must ride over him. But the man, as if deaf, walked straight forward. This obliged me to hold back my horse. In the mean time, the shaft of the cart came full against his shoulder with such a shock as beat him to the ground. He shot me forward over his head, as an arrow out of a bow, where I lay with my arms and legs, I know not how, stretched out in a line close to the wall. The wheel ran by close to my side, but only dirtied my clothes. I found no flutter of spirit, but the same composure as if I had been sitting in my study. When the cart was gone I rose. Abundance of people gathered round, till a gentleman desired me to step into his shop. After cleaning myself a little I took horse again, and was at Wick by the

time appointed. I returned to Bristol (where the report of my being killed had spread far and wide) time enough to praise God in the great congregation, and to preach on, 'Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast.'"

He now visited, with those that laboured with him, many parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire, where he had never been before. He also visited Plymouth and many other places in the west; and in every place *the work of God prospered.* Mr. Wesley observes, "This is no cant word: it means, 'the conversion of sinners from sin to holiness.'" But still they were obliged in many parts to carry their lives in their hands. Some instances of this have been related already. I shall mention one more, in his own words.

"After preaching at Oakhill, a village in Somersetshire, I rode on to Shepton Mallett, but found the people all under a strange consternation. A mob they said was hired, and made sufficiently drunk to do all manner of mischief. I began preaching between four and five, and none hindered or interrupted at all. We had a blessed opportunity, and the hearts of many were exceedingly comforted. I wondered what was become of the mob. But we were quickly informed they mistook the place, imagining I should alight (as I used to do) at William Stone's house, and had summoned by drum all their forces together to meet me at my coming. But Mr. Swindells (one of the preachers) innocently carrying me to the other end of the town, they did not find their mistake till I had done preaching.

"However, they attended us from the preaching-house to William Stone's, throwing dirt, stones, and clods, in abundance; but they could not hurt us, only Mr. Swindells had a little dirt on his coat and I a few specks on my hat.

"After we had gone into the house they began throwing large stones in order to break the door. But perceiving this would require some time they dropped that design for the present. They then broke all the tiles on the pent-house over the door, and poured in a shower of stones at the windows. One of their captains in his great zeal had followed us into the house, and was now shut in with us. He did not like this, and would fain have got out, but it was not possible. So he kept as close to me as he could, thinking himself safest when he was near me. But staying a little behind, (when I went up two pair of stairs, and

stood close on one side where we were a little sheltered,) a large stone struck him on the forehead and the blood spouted out like a stream. He cried out, 'O sir, are we to die to-night? What must I do? What must I do?'—I said, 'Pray to God. He is able to deliver you from all danger.' He took my advice, and began praying, I believe, as he had scarce ever done before.

"Mr. Swindells and I then went to prayer, after which I told him, 'We must not stay here. We must go down immediately.' —He said, 'Sir, we cannot stir, you see how the stones fly about.'—I walked straight through the room and down the stairs; and not a stone came in till we were at the bottom. The mob had just broke open the door when we came into the lower room; and while they burst in at one door we walked out at the other. Nor did one man take any notice of us, though we were within five yards of each other.

"They filled the house at once, and proposed setting it on fire. But one of them remembering that his own house was next, persuaded them not to do it. Hearing one of them cry out, 'They are gone over the grounds,' I thought the hint was good. So we went over the grounds to the far end of the town, where one waited, and undertook to guide us to Oakhill.

"I was riding on in Shepton-lane, it being now quite dark, when he cried out, 'Come down! come down from the bank!' I did as I was desired; but the bank being high, and the side almost perpendicular, I came down all at once, my horse and I tumbling one over another. But we both rose unhurt. In less than an hour we came to Oakhill, and the next morning to Bristol."

On his return from Ireland he visited Cornwall, and August 15, 1750, observes, "By reflecting on an odd book which I had read in this journey, 'The General Delusion of Christians with regard to Prophecy,' I was fully convinced of what I had long suspected; 1. That the Montanists,* in the second and

* The Montanists were a sect of Christians which sprung up about the year of Christ 171. They took their name from Montanus, a Phrygian by birth. They made no alteration in the creed or articles of belief then commonly received. They were abstemious and moral in their conduct. They maintained that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were not withdrawn from the faithful and pious; and that they had among themselves the gift of prophecy, &c. It is to be lamented, that at this early period of Christianity, Christian principles and Christian practice, or morality,

third centuries, were real Scriptural Christians: and 2. That the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was, not only that faith and holiness were well-nigh lost, but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture."

On his return from Cornwall he preached in the street at Shaftesbury; but none made any noise, or spake one word, while he called 'the wicked to forsake his way.' When he was returned to the house where he lodged, a constable came and said, "Sir, the mayor discharges you from preaching in this borough any more." Mr. Wesley replied, "While king George gives me leave to preach I shall not ask leave of the mayor of Shaftesbury."

September 8, he came to London, and received the following account of the death of one of the travelling preachers:—"John Jane was never well after walking from Epworth to Hainton, on an exceeding hot day, which threw him into a fever. But he was in great peace and love, even to those who greatly wanted love to him. He was some time at Alice Shadforth's house, with whom he daily talked of the things of God, spent much time in private prayer, and joined likewise with her in prayer several times in a day. On Friday, August 24, he sat in the evening by the fireside; about six he fetched a deep sigh, and never spoke more. He was alive till the same time on Saturday, when, without any struggle or sign of pain, with a smile on his face, he passed away. His last words were, 'I find the love of God in Christ Jesus.'

"All his clothes, linen and woollen, stockings, hat, and wig, are not thought sufficient to answer his funeral expenses, which amount to one pound seventeen shillings and three pence.* All the money he had was one shilling and four pence."—"Enough," adds Mr. Wesley, "for any unmarried preacher of the gospel

were too much separated; and that whoever differed from the rulers of the church were immediately branded with the name of heretics; their principles and practices were represented with little or no regard to truth; and all manner of evil was spoken of them to deter the people from going near them.

* Mr. Southey seems to think that *the crucifixion to the world*, manifest in Mr. Jane, arose from his devotedness to Mr. Wesley; and supposes St. Francis himself would have been satisfied with such a disciple. *We* give him credit for a higher principle: he had learned of the same Master.

to leave to his executors!"—Mr. Wesley spent the remainder of the year, 1750, in London, Bristol, and the neighbouring places; and in preparing several books for the use of the children at Kingswood school.

Mr. Wesley had many correspondents; and it often surprised his friends that he could answer one fourth of the letters he received. But by never losing any time he was enabled to get through this duty also, and could say with the Trojan hero, *Nec me labor iste gravabit.* He was often fatigued, but *his labour never saddened him:* he served a good Master.

Writing to a friend on the subject of reproof, and of remedying things that were amiss, he observes, "Come on, now you have broke the ice, and tell me the other half of your mind. I always blamed you for speaking too little, not too much. When you spoke most freely, as at Whitehaven, it was best for us both.

"I did not always disbelieve when I said nothing. But I would not attempt a thing till I could carry it. *Tu quod scis, nescis,* [*to be as though I knew not what I really know,*] is a useful rule till I can remedy what I know. As you observe, many things are remedied already, and many more will be. But you consider I have none to second me. They who should do it start aside as a broken bow."

The following abstract from a letter written to Mr. Wesley by one who loved and highly esteemed him, may show us that he had some friends who spake their minds freely when they saw any thing which, in their judgment, deserved censure or blame: "I love, I honour, I reverence you," says the writer, "for your great worth, wisdom, and high office; yet I have not that fellowship with you that I once had with T. S.—I have loved your company, loved your conversation, admired your wisdom, been greatly blessed under your discourses and exhortations; and yet we are two spirits! I think you have the knowledge of all experience, but not the experience of all you know. You know, speaking with limitation, the heights and depths, the beginning and end, of true religion. You know the fallen state of man, his inability to rise again; the freeness of redeeming love, and the mighty workings of the Holy Ghost. You know the heaven and happiness of man is to feel a change of nature, to enjoy deep communion with God, and to walk in love with all around. All these things you know, partly by the informa-

tion of others, and partly from experience. But, I think, your experience is buried in your extensive knowledge.* I think you feel not, abidingly, a deep sense of your own spiritual weakness, the nearness of Christ to save, nor a sweet communion with God, by the Holy Ghost. You have the appearance of all Christian graces; but they do not, I think, spring from a deep experience, or change of nature. A good natural temper of mind with great abilities will mimic grace; but grace is more than outward; it brings the soul to a deep union with God and its fellow Christians. One outward proof, from which I think I judge aright, is the want of *sympathy* in your discourses and conversation. Those who attend to an *inward* work more than to an *outward*, pass through many weighty and grievous conflicts, from the stubbornness of their own nature or the subtlety of the devil, so that often they go on lamenting and weeping, and yet trusting in God. When do you *feelingly* and with tears address yourself unto such?—That the cause, the only cause of my disunion with you may be in myself, I cannot but allow. My ignorance, my weakness, my aptness to mistake, is great! My judgment is often biassed by circumstances too immaterial to be the ground of determination; and therefore often, yea, mostly, rather than be in danger of judging amiss I remain in doubtful silence. W. BRIGGS."

Mr. Wesley really felt all this, and sympathized with all those who fought this 'good fight of faith.' But his duties were so great, so public, so constant, that he could not let out his feelings as the pastor of a separate congregation might.

January 30, 1751. Mr. Wesley, at the pressing request of Dr. Isham, then rector of Lincoln college, set out early in the morning to vote for a member of parliament. It was a severe frost, the wind northwest, full in his face, and the roads so slippery that the horses could scarcely keep their feet. Nevertheless about seven in the evening he and those with him (for he seldom travelled alone) came safe to Oxford. A congregation was waiting for him, whom he immediately addressed in those awful words, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole

* Never was a character more mistaken. I had the advantage which Mr. Briggs had not, and I know that this great man was a little child among those he loved, and that he even lay at their feet and gladly learned of them when he saw they had 'the wisdom from above.'

world and lose his own soul?'—The next day he went to the schools where the convocation met. "But," says he, "I did not find that decency and order which I expected. The gentleman for whom I voted was not elected; yet I did not repent of my coming: I owe much more than this to that generous, friendly man, who now rests from his labours." Mr. Wesley means Dr. Morley, who so generously assisted him with his interest when he was elected Fellow of Lincoln college.

It does not appear that Mr. Charles Wesley kept a regular journal from the year 1749. His journal fails with the constancy of his itinerant labours. Sensible and pious readers will easily account for this. It seems he considered it a conscientious duty to record those arduous exertions, with the dangers and gracious deliverances that accompanied them. It did not appear to him necessary to record the common routine of duty, however important to himself. Those who knew him do not need to be told that he was deeply imbued with a modest and retired spirit: not that kind of modesty which is the offspring of fear or self-seeking, but that which, in the most fearless efforts for truth, revolts from every kind of ostentation. He had deep self-knowledge, and even an undue love of retirement, arising, I believe, from a natural melancholy, which only divine grace could counteract. He became at this period a domestic man, and was soon the father of a family. There was no provision at that time for a family itinerating; his labours therefore, in that line, were from this time occasional, and seldom continued long when necessity or plain duty did not call for them. Those occasional labours he has recorded; but he was too well aware of what the satirist has said concerning "the importance of a man to himself," either to trouble or amuse the world with an account of common occurrences, however interesting. He kept a diary during his life, of daily events, written in short-hand, which he showed to me; and by which he could review his mercies and excite his spirit to thankfulness, but without any thought of its ever meeting the public eye, and which therefore has, very properly I think, been withheld from it. I shall proceed to give the remains of his labours as an itinerant, which will not be found uninteresting.

The marriage of Mr. C. Wesley does not appear to have long interrupted his labours. April 29, about three weeks after he

was married he wrote thus to his brother; "I hope this will find you prospering in Ireland; I left Garth yesterday se'nnight. Mr. Gwynne, with Sally and Betty, accompanied me to Abergavenny. There I left them on Saturday morning and got hither (Bristol) by one o'clock. Overriding occasioned a fever—I was too eager for the work, and therefore believe God checked me by that short sickness. Till Wednesday evening at Weaver's Hall my strength and understanding did not return: but from that time the Lord has been with us of a truth. More zeal, more life, more power, I have not felt for some years, (I wish my mentioning this may not lessen it,) so that hitherto marriage has been no hinderance. You will hardly believe it sits so light upon me. Some farther proof I had of my heart on Saturday last, when the fever threatened most. I did not find, so far I can say, any unwillingness to die on account of any I should leave behind; neither did death appear less desirable than formerly—which I own gave me great pleasure and made me shed tears of joy. I almost believe nothing shall hurt me; that the world, the flesh, and the devil, shall keep their distance; or by assaulting, leave me more than conqueror. On Thursday I propose setting out for London by Oxford, with T. Maxfield. If they will give me a year of grace I shall wonder and thank you.* I hope you came time enough to save J. Cownly,† &c. Set your time for returning; *when abouts*, at least.‡ Will you meet me at Ludlow? It is a thousand pities you should not be here when the library makes its first appearance. The Lord cut short your work and his, and make a few weeks go as far as many months! What say you to T. Maxfield and me taking a journey, when you return, through all the societies, northern and western, and settling correspondences with the stewards, *alias* booksellers? My kindest love to Mr. Lunell, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Fowks, Mr. Gibbons, and all friends at Cork and Dublin. We make mention of you in all our prayers; be not unmindful of us. The Lord preserve us all to *his day*."

* He alludes to that law of Moses, which ordered that a man newly married should not go out to war for one year.

† His fear for that good man was, that he would melt in the sunshine of Cork, which, after the persecution was over, his brother used to call the Capua of the preachers; alluding to Hannibal's army at that place. The people of Cork thought they never could sufficiently show their love to the preachers who had suffered with them, and for them, in that fiery trial.

‡ In this familiar way, approaching to carelessness, he often wrote to his brother

February 8, 1750. He observes, there was an earthquake in London. This place he reached on the 1st of March; and on the 8th wrote thus to his brother; "This morning, a quarter after five, we had another shock of an earthquake, far more violent than that of February the 9th. I was just repeating my text, when it shook the Foundery so violently that we all expected it to fall on our heads. A great cry followed from the women and children. I immediately cried out, 'Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea: for the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge!' He filled my heart with faith and my mouth with words, shaking their souls as well as their bodies. The earth moved westward, then east, then westward again, through all London and Westminster. It was a strong and jarring motion, attended with a rumbling noise like that of thunder. Many houses were much shaken, and some chimneys thrown down, but without any farther hurt."

March 10. He expounded the 24th chapter of Isaiah; a chapter, he tells us, which he had not taken much notice of, till this awful providence explained it.—April 4, he says, "Fear filled our chapel, occasioned by a prophecy of the return of the earthquake this night. I preached my written sermon on the subject with great effect, and gave out several suitable hymns. It was a glorious night for the disciples of Jesus.—April 5. I rose at four o'clock, after a night of sound sleep, while my neighbours watched. I sent an account to M. G. as follows:—The late earthquake has found me work. Yesterday I saw the Westminster end of the town full of coaches, and crowds flying out of the reach of Divine Justice with astonishing precipitation. Their panic was caused by a poor madman's prophecy. Last night they were all to be swallowed up! The vulgar were in almost as great consternation as their betters. Most of them watched all night; multitudes in the fields and open places; several in their coaches: many removed their goods. London looked like a sacked city. A lady, just stepping into her coach to escape, dropped down dead. Many came all night knocking at the Foundery door, and begging admittance for God's sake."—These, however, were not Methodists, but others who, under the general apprehension of danger, thought there was more safety under the roof of religious persons than elsewhere: a

plain proof that those who neglect religion and perhaps despise the professors of it, while in health and free from apparent danger, yet when great calamities approach them, clearly discover that they think the state of religious persons better than their own.—Mr. C. Wesley's account of the great confusion in London on the 4th of April is confirmed by a letter of Mr. W Briggs to Mr. John Wesley, dated on the 5th of the same month, in which he says, "This great city has been for some days past under terrible apprehensions of another earthquake. Yesterday thousands fled out of town, it having been confidently asserted by a dragoon, that he had a revelation that great part of London, and Westminster especially, would be destroyed by an earthquake the 4th instant, between twelve and one at night. The whole city was under direful apprehensions. Places of worship were crowded with frightened sinners, especially our two chapels and the tabernacle where Mr. Whitefield preached. Several of the classes came to their leaders and desired that they would spend the night with them in prayer; which was done, and God gave them a blessing. Indeed all around was awful! Being not at all convinced of the prophet's mission, and having no call from any of my brethren, I went to bed at my usual time, believing I was safe in the hands of Christ; and likewise, that by doing so I should be the more ready to rise to the preaching in the morning—which we both did; praised be our kind Protector!"—In a postscript he adds, "Though crowds left the town on Wednesday night, yet crowds were left behind; multitudes of whom, for fear of being suddenly overwhelmed, left their houses and repaired to the fields and open places in the city. Tower-Hill, Moorfields, but above all, Hyde-Park, were filled best part of the night with men, women, and children, lamenting. Some with stronger imaginations than others, mostly women, ran crying in the streets, 'An earthquake! an earthquake!' Such a distress, perhaps, is not recorded to have happened before in this careless city. Mr. Whitefield preached at midnight in Hyde-Park. Surely God will visit this city: it will be a time of mercy to some. O may I be found watching!"

June 22. "I met," says Mr. C. Wesley, "a daughter of my worthy old friend Mr. Erskine, at the Foundery: she was deeply wounded by the sword of the Spirit; confessed she had turned many to Deism, and feared there could be no mercy for her.—

July 18. I had the satisfaction of bringing back to Mr. Erskine his formerly disobedient daughter. She fell at his feet: it was a moving interview—all wept—our Heavenly Father heard our prayers."

December 2. Being in Wales, he observes, "I encouraged a poor girl to seek a cure from him who hath wounded her. She has the outward mark too; being daily threatened to be turned out of doors by her master, a great swearer and strict churchman, a constant communicant and a habitual drunkard."

At this time James Wheatley having fallen from God, brought much scandal on the people with whom he was connected. Mr. Wesley in conjunction with his brother searched out the truth of the complaints, and first suspended and afterward expelled the guilty person. Wheatley had said, when charged, that others were as guilty as he had been; a very natural supposition for such a man. This assertion put the brothers upon a resolution strictly to examine into the religious and moral character of every preacher in the connexion; "and the office," says Mr. Charles Wesley, "fell upon me." He was, under such circumstances, well fitted to search out the evil. It has been said, but not by a friend, that the two brothers were totally dissimilar—that one *believed all things*, and the other *believed nothing*. Both parts of the assertion are untrue. Both were upright men, but Mr. John Wesley had eminently *the love that hopeth all things*. He had also a high and piercing sense of his situation and responsibility. In his rules of discipline he exhorts every preacher to "beware how they believed evil of any man. Unless it be proved," says he, "take heed how you credit it. *Your* word especially would eat as doth a canker." His brother did not sufficiently feel this, neither did he occupy such high ground. We shall see in the course of these memoirs how much he was hindered in his usefulness by a deficiency in this temper so absolutely necessary for such a situation.

Mr. Charles Wesley being clothed with his new office, set out the next morning, June 29, to visit the societies in the midland and northern counties, as far as Newcastle; in which journey Mrs. Wesley accompanied him; but even Dr. Whitehead adds, "I do not find, however, in the whole of his journal, the least accusation of a nature similar to that of Wheatley against any preacher in the connexion." In this journey he

was a great blessing to the people wherever he came; many were added to the societies, and the old members were quickened in their zeal and diligence to 'work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.'

July 21. He observes, "I rode to Birstal, (near Leeds,) where John Nelson comforted our hearts with his account of the success of the gospel in every place where he has been preaching, except in Scotland. There he has been beating the air for three weeks, and spending his strength in vain. Twice a day he preached at Musselborough to some thousands of mere hearers without one soul being converted. I preached at one to a different kind of people. Such a sight have I not seen for many months. They filled the valley and side of the hill as grasshoppers for multitude; yet my voice reached the most distant—God sent the word home to many hearts."—July 25. He was taken ill of a fever; and on the 28th his fever increasing, he says, "I judged it incumbent on me to leave my thoughts concerning the work and the instruments, and began dictating the following letter "—Unfortunately the letter was not transcribed into the journal,—a blank space was left for it: I apprehend it is not now to be found any where.

August 12. Being at Newcastle he desired W Shent, who was with him, to go to Musselborough. Before he set out he gave Mr. C. Wesley the following account of a remarkable trial they lately had at Leeds.—"At White-coat Hill, three miles from Leeds, a few weeks since as our brother Maskew was preaching, a mob arose, broke the windows and doors, and struck the constable, Joseph Hawley, one of the society. On this we indicted them for an assault, but the ringleader of the mob, John Hellingworth, indicted our brother the constable, and got persons to swear the constable struck him. The grand jury threw out our indictment and found theirs against us, so we stood trial with them on Monday, July 15, 1751. The recorder, Richard Wilson, Esq., gave it in our favour, with the rest of the court. But the foreman of the jury, Matthew Priestley, with two others, Richard Cloudsly and Jabez Bunnel, would not agree with the rest, being our avowed enemies. The foreman was Mr. Murgatroyd's great friend and champion against the Methodists. However, the recorder gave strict orders to a guard of constables to watch the jury that they should have

neither meat, drink, candles, nor tobacco, till they were agreed in their verdict. They were kept prisoners all that night and the next day till five in the afternoon, when one of the jury said, 'he would die before he would give it against us.' Then he spake closely to the foreman concerning his prejudice against the Methodists, till at last he condescended to refer it to one man. Him the other charged to speak as he would answer it to God in the day of judgment. The man turned pale, trembled, and desired that another might decide it. Another, John Hardwick, being called upon, immediately decided it in favour of the Methodists. After the trial, Sir Henry Ibison, one of the justices, called one of our brethren to him and said, 'You see God never forsakes a righteous man; take care you never forsake him.'"

CHAPTER III.

EXTRAORDINARY EVENT PRECEDING MR. WESLEY'S MARRIAGE—VERSES ON THAT OCCASION—HIS MARRIAGE—RENEWED ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN HIM AND HIS BROTHER—MR. WESLEY'S PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. Wesley had hitherto preferred a single life, because, as he himself observes, he believed he could be more useful in a single than in a married state; "and I praise God," says he, "who enabled me so to do." He now as fully believed, that, in his present circumstances, he might be more useful in a married state: into which, upon this clear conviction, and by the advice of his friends, he entered some time after.

Some years previous to this step he had published a small tract entitled, *Thoughts on a Single Life*. He therein advised all unmarried persons who were able to receive it, to follow the counsel of our Lord and St. Paul, and *remain single for the kingdom of heaven's sake*. But in the same tract he pronounces after St. Paul, the *forbidding to marry, to be a doctrine of devils*, and declares, "it cannot be doubted but a man may be as holy in a married as in a single state." Nor did he ever suppose,

that this precept was designed of God for the many. Several years after his marriage he mentions in his Journal his again reading over that tract, and observes, "I am of the same mind still; and I must be so till I give up my Bible."

I should not have said so much on the present occasion if it was not for the many fleers that have been cast at Mr. Wesley on this account. The best excuse that can be made for those gentlemen who have indulged their wit on this subject, is that they knew nothing of the matter; that they had never seriously considered those passages of the Bible alluded to, nor ever read over what Mr. Wesley has said upon them. It was quite enough for them to hear that he had recommended celibacy, and had afterward married; which all candid men, who believe the Scriptures, must be sensible involves neither blame nor contradiction.

Dr. Whitehead has prefaced his account of this event by stating—"That Mr. Wesley a year or more before this period had formed a resolution to marry; but the affair coming to the knowledge of Mr. C. Wesley before the marriage took place, he found means to prevent it, for reasons which appeared to him of sufficient importance. Mr. John Wesley, however, thought otherwise; and this was the first breach of that union and harmony which had subsisted between the two brothers without interruption for more than twenty years."—As I know more of the case alluded to than Dr. Whitehead did, I must state it a little more at large. The person on whom Mr. Wesley's affections were placed was in every respect worthy of them. From documents now before me I am enabled to give a short account of this very interesting attachment, and of its failure, so very painful to Mr. Wesley.

Miss Grace Norman, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was married at a very early age to Mr. Alexander Murray, of a respectable family in Scotland. He was then in the seafaring line, in which he continued till his death. He was an affectionate husband, and his kind attentions were repaid by the affectionate attachment of his wife; but they were both at that time totally insensible to the happiness of religion, Mrs. Murray having departed from the God of her early youth. After some time she was awakened by the powerful preaching of that day, and immediately began to fulfil her baptismal vow. She renounced

the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, in which they had both delighted, and became the devoted servant of the Lord that bought her.* This change gave her husband great pain, and for some time she suffered a degree of real persecution from him. He even threatened to confine her in a mad-house. Her gentle and affectionate behaviour in some measure overcame this evil; but his death at sea, which happened not long after, almost overwhelmed her. She was, however, strengthened by divine grace to submit to this afflictive bereavement, and it was sanctified in a remarkable manner to her *furtherance and growth in grace.*

After the death of her husband Mrs. Murray returned to Newcastle; and when Mr. Wesley formed a family, connected with his chapel in that town, he appointed her to be the housekeeper. Mr. Wesley had three houses which he accounted *his own*, one at London, another at Bristol, and a third at Newcastle; to all others he had only the power to appoint the preachers. These houses might be called *Religious Houses;* the housekeepers were persons eminent for piety. The itinerant preachers in the western, northern, and middle counties, occasionally visited these establishments, and rested for a short space from their great labour.

Mrs. Murray had now full employment in that way in which she delighted. In the town and in the country societies, her labours of love, especially among the females, were remarkably owned of the Lord and highly edifying. Mr. Wesley then enlarged her sphere, and she travelled through the northern counties to meet and regulate the female classes. She then under his direction visited Ireland, where she abounded in the same work of faith and love for several months; and though she never attempted to preach, her gifts were much honoured, and her 'name as ointment poured forth.' She returned by Bristol, and visited the societies in the southern and eastern counties, and rested again at Newcastle.

Mr. Wesley, who knew all her proceedings and greatly esteemed her labours, thought he had found a help meet for him. But while he indulged these pleasing prospects, in which he was encouraged by his highly-valued friend, the vicar of Shoreham, and others, they were dashed to pieces by the intelligence of

*See her Letter to Mr. Charles Wesley, vol. i, p. 523.

Mrs. Murray's marriage, on the third day of October, 1749, at Newcastle, to Mr. John Bennet, one of the itinerant preachers, in the presence of Mr. C. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield!

A son, the fruit of this marriage, and who became a Dissenting minister, published a short memoir of his pious mother after her death; in which he informs his readers that his father, when on a visit to the house at Newcastle, was seized with a violent fever; and that, when all his friends despaired of his life, he was, as he always declared, given back to them in answer to the prayers of Mrs. Murray. From that period he thought, as his son informs us, that "she was given to him for a wife, although he did not declare this for a long time after." I cannot at this distance of time fully state the causes of this strange interference, especially as, contrary to his usual freedom, I do not remember ever to have heard Mr. Wesley mention the event. The high character of those concerned forbids the imputation of any corrupt motive.

The disappointment was a most severe one to Mr. Wesley, and perhaps the forgiveness and love which he manifested on that occasion was the highest proof of the power of the religion he possessed that he was ever called to exercise toward man. He continued to employ Mr. Bennet as before, and behaved to him with his usual kindness: that gentleman, however, became still more intimate with Mr. Whitefield, adopted his sentiments, and at length publicly separated from Mr. Wesley at Bolton, in Lancashire, on April 3d, 1752. He afterward settled as a Dissenting minister at Warbutton in Cheshire, where he died on the 24th of May, 1759.

There is now lying before me a copy of verses by Mr. Wesley, never yet published, which will fully warrant all I have said concerning this painful event. He seems to have written to ease his bleeding heart. The public life which his high calling obliged him to adopt, caused him generally to restrain the feelings of one of the kindest hearts that ever man was blest with. But in these verses we see that warm and tender nature breathe itself forth without restraint, except from submission to God; a point of religion which he ever inculcated as the highest fruit of grace.

REFLECTIONS UPON PAST PROVIDENCES.

OCTOBER, 1749.

O Lord, I bow my sinful head!
Righteous are all thy ways with man;
Yet suffer me with thee to plead,
With lowly rev'rence to complain:
With deep unutter'd grief to groan,
"O what is this that thou hast done!"

Oft, as through giddy youth I roved,
And danced along the flow'ry way,
By chance or thoughtless passion moved,
An easy, unresisting prey
I fell, while love's envenom'd dart
Thrill'd through my nerves, and tore my heart

At length, by sad experience taught,
Firm I shook off the abject yoke;
Abhorr'd his sweetly pois'nous draught,
Through all his wily fetters broke;
Fix'd my desires on things above,
And languish'd for celestial love!

Borne on the wings of sacred hope,
Long had I soar'd, and spurn'd the ground:
When, panting for the mountain-top,
My soul a kindred spirit found;
By Heaven intrusted to my care,
The daughter of my faith and prayer.

In early dawn of life, serene,
Mild, sweet, and tender, was her mood!
Her pleasing form spoke all within
Soft and compassionately good;
List'ning to every wretch's care,
Mingling with each her friendly tear.

In dawn of life, to feed the poor,
Glad she her little all bestow'd;
Wise to lay up a better store,
And hast'ning to be rich in God;
God whom she sought with early care,
With rev'rence, and with lowly fear.

Ere twice four years pass'd o'er her head,
Her infant mind with love he fill'd;
His gracious, glorious name reveal'd,
And sweetly forced her heart to yield;
She groan'd t' ascend Heaven's high abode,
To die into the arms of God!

Yet, warm with youth and beauty's pride,
Soon was her heedless soul betray'd:

From heaven her footsteps turn'd aside
O'er pleasure's flow'ry plain she stray'd,
Fondly the toys of earth she sought,
And God was not in all her thought.

Not long:—a messenger she saw,
Sent forth glad tidings to proclaim:
She heard, with joy and wond'ring awe,
His cry, "Sinners, behold the LAMB!"
His eye her inmost nature shook,
His word her heart in pieces broke.

Her bosom heaved with lab'ring sighs,
And groan'd th' unutterable prayer;
As rivers, from her streaming eyes
Fast flow'd the never-ceasing tear,
Till Jesus spake—"Thy mourning 's o'er,
Believe, rejoice, and weep no more!"

She heard;—pure love her soul o'erflowed,
Sorrow and sighing fled away;
With sacred zeal her spirit glow'd,
Panting his every word t' obey;
Her faith by plenteous fruit she show'd,
And all her works were wrought in God.

Nor works alone her faith approved;
Soon in affliction's furnace tried
By him, whom next to Heaven she loved,
As silver seven times purified,
Shone midst the flames her constant mind,
Emerged, and left the dross behind.

When death, in freshest strength of years,
Her much-loved friend tore from her breast,
Awhile she pour'd her plaints and tears,
But, quickly turning to her rest,
"Thy will be done!" she meekly cried,
"Suffice, for me the Saviour died!"

When first I view'd, with fix'd regard,
Her artless tears in silence flow,
"For thee are better things prepared,"
I said, "Go forth, with Jesus go!
My Master's peace be on thy soul
Till perfect love shall make thee whole!"

I saw her run, with winged speed,
In works of faith and lab'ring love;
I saw her glorious toil succeed,
And showers of blessings from above,
Crowning her warm effectual prayer,
And glorified my God in her.

Yet while to all her tender mind
In streams of pure affection flow'd.

To ONE by ties peculiar join'd,
One, only less beloved than God,
"Myself," she said, "my soul I owe,—
My guardian angel here below!"

From heaven the grateful ardour came,
Pure from the dross of low desire;
Well-pleased I mark'd the guiltless flame,
Nor dared to damp the sacred fire,
Heaven's choicest gift on man bestow'd,
Strength'ning our hearts and hands in God.

'Twas now I bow'd my aching head,
While sickness shook the house of clay;
Duteous she ran with humble speed,
Love's tenderest offices to pay,
To ease my pain, to soothe my care,
T' uphold my feeble hands in prayer.

Amazed, I cried, "Surely for me
A help prepared of Heaven thou art!
Thankful, I take the gift from thee,
O Lord! and nought on earth shall part
The souls that thou hast join'd above,
In lasting bonds of sacred love."

Abash'd she spoke, "O what is this?
Far above all my boldest hope!
Can God, beyond my utmost wish,
Thus lift his worthless handmaid up?
This only could my soul desire!
This only had I dared require!"

From that glad hour, with growing love,
Heaven's latest, dearest gift I view'd;
While, pleased each moment to improve,
We urged our way with strength renew'd,
Our one desire, our common aim,
T' extol our gracious Master's name.

Companions now in weal and wo,
No power on earth could us divide;
Nor summer's heat nor winter's snow
Could tear my partner from my side:
Nor toil, nor weariness, nor pain,
Nor horrors of the angry main.

Oft, (though as yet the nuptial tie
Was not,) clasping her hand in mine,
What force," she said, "beneath the sky
Can now our well-knit souls disjoin?
With thee I'd go to India's coast,
To worlds in distant oceans lost!"

Such was the friend than life more dear,
Whom in one luckless baleful hour,

(For ever mentioned with a tear!)
The tempter's unresisted power
(O the unutterable smart!)
Tore from my inly-bleeding heart!

Unsearchable thy judgments are,
O Lord! a bottomless abyss!
Yet sure thy love, thy guardian care,
O'er all thy works extended is!
O why didst thou the blessing send?
Or why thus snatch away my friend?

What thou hast done, I know not now;
Suffice, I shall hereafter know!
Beneath thy chast'ning hand I bow;
That still I live, to thee I owe.
O teach thy deeply-humbled son,
Father! to say, "Thy will be done!"

Teach me, from every pleasing snare
To keep the issues of my heart;
Be thou my love, my joy, my fear!
Thou my eternal portion art!
Be thou my NEVER-FAILING FRIEND,
And love, O love me to the end!

In the year 1788 the son of Mr. Bennet, already mentioned, officiated at a chapel on the PAVEMENT in Moorfields, and his mother came to London in that year on a visit to him. Mr. Thomas Olivers having seen her, mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Wesley when I was with him, and intimated that Mrs. Bennet wished to see him. Mr. Wesley, with evident feeling, resolved to visit her; and the next morning he took me with him to Colebrooke-row, where her son then resided. The meeting was affecting; but Mr. Wesley preserved more than his usual self-possession. It was easy to see, notwithstanding the many years which had intervened, that both in sweetness of spirit and in person and manners she was a fit subject for the tender regrets expressed in those verses which I have presented to the reader. The interview did not continue long, and I do not remember that I ever heard Mr. Wesley mention her name afterward.

Some years after the death of her husband Mrs. Bennet removed to Chapel-en-le-Frith, where she again joined the Methodist society, and, according to her first faith and practice, she abounded in those works of piety and mercy which distinguished her early days. She lived twelve years after the death of Mr.

Wesley, and entered into the joy of her Lord, February the 23d, 1803, in the eighty-fifth year of her age.

Dr. Whitehead, speaking of Mr. Wesley's marriage, says that "he seems to have considered St. Paul's advice to the church at Corinth as a standing rule to Christians in all circumstances;" and adds, "it is really wonderful how he could fall into such an error." But Mr. Wesley did not fall into it; the wonder is, that the doctor should assert that he did. Mr. Wesley wrote the tract on that subject, chiefly from our Lord's words, (Matt. xix,) which were spoken at a time when the infant church was not in such circumstances as the apostle's words imply. Mr. Southey's account is much more correct and candid: he observes, "Mr. Wesley did not suppose that such a precept could have been intended for the many;" and that "he assented fully to the sentence of the apostle who pronounced the forbidding to marry to be a doctrine of devils." To the generality of men, with all its dangers and troubles, marriage is absolutely necessary in order to holiness. The doctor however observes with truth, that, "had he married a woman who would have entered into his views and accommodated herself to his situation, it might have formed a basis for much happiness. But had he searched the whole kingdom on purpose, he could hardly have found a woman more unsuitable in these respects than the one he married."

Mrs. Vizelle, (afterward Wesley,) however, from all that I have heard from Mr. Wesley and others, had every appearance of being well qualified for the sphere in which she was introduced. She seemed truly pious, and was very agreeable in her person and manners. She conformed to every company whether of the rich or the poor: and she had a remarkable facility and propriety in addressing them concerning their true interests. She departed, however, from this excellent way, and the marriage consequently became an unhappy one. I cannot take upon me to state, in every respect, all the causes of that inquietude which for some years lay so heavy upon him. It might arise, in some degree, from his peculiar situation with respect to the great work in which he was engaged. He has more than once mentioned to me that it was agreed between him and Mrs. Wesley, previous to their marriage, that he should not preach one sermon or travel one mile the less on that account.

"If I thought I should," said he, "my dear, as well as I love you I would never see your face more."

But Mrs. Wesley did not long continue in this mind. She travelled with him for some time, but afterward she would fain have confined him to a more domestic life; and having found by experience that this was impossible, she unhappily gave place to jealousy. This entirely spoiled her temper and drove her to many outrages. She repeatedly left his house, but was brought back by his earnest importunities. At last she seized on part of his journals and many other papers, which she would never afterward restore; and taking her final departure left word that she never intended to return. Who then can wonder that after all this he should only observe, "*Non eam reliqui, non dimisi: non revocabo.*—I have not left her; I have not put her away; I will not call her back." She died in the year 1781, at Camberwell, near London. A stone is placed at the head of her grave, in the churchyard of that place, setting forth, "that she was a woman of exemplary piety; a tender parent, and a sincere friend."

What fortune she possessed at her death she left to a Mr. Vizelle, her son by a former husband. To Mr. Wesley she bequeathed a ring. There are several letters which passed between them relative to their mutual uneasiness. These letters I have had before me and fully considered; but they would add nothing material to the account which I have given. I shall, however, present my readers with a long postcript of one of his, as it is a summary of the unhappy dispute.

"I cannot but add a few words; not by way of reproach, but of advice. God has used many means to curb your stubborn will, and break the impetuosity of your temper. He has given you a dutiful but sickly daughter: he has taken away one of your sons. Another has been a grievous cross, as the third probably will be. He has suffered you to be defrauded of much money; he has chastened you with strong pain. And still he may say, 'How long liftest thou up thyself against me?' Are you more humble, more gentle, more patient, more placable, than you was? I fear quite the reverse: I fear your natural tempers are rather increased than diminished. O beware lest God give you up to your own heart's lusts, and let you follow your own imaginations!

"Under all these conflicts it might be an unspeakable blessing that you have a husband who knows your temper and can bear with it; who, after you have tried him numberless ways, laid to his charge things that he knew not, robbed him, betrayed his confidence, revealed his secrets, given him a thousand treacherous wounds, purposely aspersed and murdered his character, and made it your *business* so to do, under the poor pretence of vindicating your own character, (whereas of what importance is *your* character to mankind; if you was buried just now? or if you had never lived, what loss would it be to the cause of God?) who, I say, after all these provocations is still willing to forgive you all; to overlook what is past as if it had not been, and to receive you with open arms; only not while you have a sword in your hand, with which you are continually striking at me, though you cannot hurt me. If, notwithstanding, you continue striking, what can I, what can all reasonable men think, but that you are utterly out of your senses, or your eye is not single; that you married me for my money; that, being disappointed, you was almost always out of humour; that this laid you open to a thousand suspicions, which, once awakened, could sleep no more?

"My dear Molly, let the time past suffice. If you have not (to prevent my giving it to bad women)* robbed me of my substance too; if you do not blacken me on purpose that when this causes a breach between us no one may believe it to be your fault; stop, and consider what you do; as yet the breach may be repaired; you have wronged me much, but not beyond forgiveness. I love you still, and am as clear from all other women as the day I was born. At length know me, and know yourself. Your enemy I cannot be; but let me be your friend. Suspect me no more; asperse me no more; provoke me no more. Do not any longer contend for mastery, for power, money, or praise. Be content to be a private insignificant person, known and loved by God and me. Attempt no more to abridge me of my liberty, which I claim by the laws of God and man. Leave me to be governed by God and my own conscience. Then shall I govern you with gentle sway, and show that I do indeed love you, even as Christ loved the church."

* Her jealousy having strangely induced her to bring that terrible charge against him.

Mr. Wesley, however, bore this severe trial well. He has repeatedly told me that he believed the Lord overruled this whole painful business for his good: and that if Mrs. Wesley had been a better wife, and had continued to act in that way in which she knew well how to act, he might have been unfaithful in the great work to which the Lord had called him, and might have too much sought to please her according to her own views.

Soon after his marriage he resigned his fellowship. His letter of resignation was as follows: "*Ego Johannes Wesley, collegii Lincolniensis in academia Oxoniensi socius, quicquid mihi juris est in prædicta societate, ejusdem rectori et sociis sponte ac libere resigno: illis universis et singulis perpetuam pacem ac omnimodo in Christo felicitatem exoptans.*—I, John Wesley, fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, freely resign to the rector and fellows whatsoever belongs to me in that society: earnestly wishing to them all and to each of them continual peace and all felicity in Christ."

Mr. Wesley having fully considered his situation determined to continue in the course prescribed to him; and shaking off his trials, "like dewdrops from a lion's mane," he set out on his northern journey. He travelled through the societies as far as Whitehaven; and April 20, 1751, he came to Newcastle. On the 24th he set out with Mr. Hopper to pay his first visit to Scotland. He was invited by captain (afterward colonel) Galatin, who was then quartered at Musselborough. "I had no intention," says he, "to preach in Scotland; not imagining that there were any that desired I should. But I was mistaken: curiosity, if nothing else, brought abundance of people together in the evening. And whereas in the kirk Mrs. Galatin informed me there used to be laughing and talking, and all the marks of the grossest inattention; it was far otherwise here. They remained as statues from the beginning of the sermon to the end. I preached again at six in the evening, on 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.' I used great plainness of speech toward high and low, and they all received it in love; so that the prejudice which had been several years planting was torn up by the roots in one hour. After preaching, one of the bailiffs of the town with one of the elders of the kirk, came to me and begged I would stay with them a while;

nay, if it were but two or three days, and they would fit up a far larger place than the school, and prepare seats for the congregations. Had not my time been fixed I should gladly have complied. All that I could now do was to give them a promise that Mr. Hopper would come back the next week and spend a few days with them. And it was not without a fair prospect: the congregations were very numerous, many were cut to the heart, and several joined together in a little society."

Mr. Southey has observed, that "resentment was a plant that *could never* take root in the heart of Wesley." We must doubt of this, as we do not hold Christian perfection quite so high as Mr. Southey seems to do in this instance. But we do believe, that, by the grace of God, *it never did.* We have seen how deeply Mr. Wesley, like his Divine Master, was wounded in the house of his friends. Resentment, it is true, was refused admission; but something more is needed than the absence of that root of bitterness to constitute Christian friendship; and especially that oneness so essential in those who conduct a work of God, particularly a work so new, being *wholly Scriptural*, and so great as we have seen this to be.

Mr. C. Wesley was now become, in a great degree, a domestic man; and the want of that activity which we have heretofore seen in his labours of love, much impaired his own comforts and laid him open to strong temptation. Mr. John Wesley has remarked to me, "While my brother remained with me he was joyous in his spirit, and his labour saddened him not. But when he departed from that activity to which the Lord called him, and in which he so greatly blessed him, his spirit became depressed; and being surrounded with 'croakers,' he often looked through the same clouds which enveloped *them.*"—In this point Dr. Whitehead's opinion coincides.

"In August, 1751," says the doctor, "Mr. C. Wesley wrote to his brother under great oppression of mind and in very strong language. Whenever he saw some things wrong his fears suggested to him that there might be many more which he did not see; and the natural warmth of his temper,"—and, I will add, his great sincerity,—"led him to use expressions abundantly more severe than the case required." But the preachers against whom, as the doctor observes, "he had no material charge, but the want of qualifications for their office," (and that chiefly on

report,) "soon obtained fresh encouragement from his brother; which was another means of weakening the union that had long subsisted between them."

Having met in London, the two brothers went down to Shoreham in November, and talked the matter over in the presence of Mr. Perronet, whom Mr. C. Wesley used to call "our archbishop." A less exceptionable *daysman* could not have been found; a man full of faith and love, and entirely devoted to God and to his work. He had fitted up a large outer room in the parsonage-house, (which I had the privilege of visiting,) where the preachers used to meet the pious people of the parish: the good man rejoicing in all that he heard, and in all the good that was done. In his presence the two brothers expressed their entire satisfaction in the end which each had in view; namely, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. They both acknowledged the sincerity of each, in desiring union between themselves as the means to that end; and after much conversation they both agreed to act in concert with respect to the preachers, so that neither of them should admit or refuse any but such as both admitted or refused.—About six weeks afterward they were at Shoreham again, and then signed the following articles of agreement:

"With regard to the preachers we agree,

"1. That none shall be permitted to preach in any of our societies till he be examined both as to his grace and gifts; at least by the assistant, who, sending word to us, may by our answer admit him a local preacher.

"2. That such preacher be not immediately taken from his trade, but be exhorted to follow it with all diligence.

"3. That no person shall be received as a travelling preacher, or be taken from his trade, by either of us alone, but by both of us conjointly, giving him a note under both our hands.

"4. That neither of us will readmit a travelling preacher laid aside, without the consent of the other.

"5. That if we should ever disagree in our judgment we will refer the matter to Mr. Perronet.

"6. That we will entirely be patterns of all we expect from every preacher; particularly of zeal, diligence, and punctuality in the work; by constantly preaching and meeting the societies; by visiting yearly Ireland, Cornwall, and the north; and, in gene-

ral, by superintending the whole work and every branch of it with all the strength which God shall give us. We agree to the above written till this day next year, in the presence of Mr. Perronet.

"JOHN WESLEY.
"CHARLES WESLEY."

Dr. Whitehead observes, "Mr. John Wesley was prevailed upon, with some difficulty, to sign these articles." But he soon found that, from the causes already mentioned, his brother was unable to execute so large an engagement with any efficiency. Mr. J. Wesley may, therefore, from this time be considered as the sole director of the work: not from the heathenish principle which Dr. Whitehead imputes to him, without any evidence, viz., that he would be *aut Cæsar, aut nullus*,* but from necessity: he could not admit of any *partner* who would not superintend the whole work and every part of it, as above stated. Mr. C. Wesley, however, occasionally assisted his brother, especially in London and Bristol, and his ministrations were always acceptable and profitable to the people.

About this time Mr. Wesley received a letter from that distinguished servant of Christ, the Rev Mr. Milner, who had been at Chester and wrote as follows on the temper of the bishop toward the Methodists. "The bishop," says he, "I was told, was exceeding angry at my late excursion into the north in your company. But I found his lordship in much better temper than I was bid to expect by my brother Graves,† who was so prudent that he would not go with one so obnoxious to the bishop's displeasure, and all the storm of anger fell upon *him*. When he told me how he had been treated for speaking in your defence, I was fully persuaded all the bitterness was past, and accordingly found it so. I told his lordship that God was with you of a truth; and he seemed pleased with the relation of the conversion of the barber at Bolton, and with your design of answering Taylor's book on Original Sin.—I have made no secret of your manner of proceeding, to any with whom I have conversed since I had the happiness of being in your company. And to the bishop I was very particular in telling him what an assembly

* He would be supreme or he would be nobody.

† Afterward Mr. Fletcher's curate.

of worshippers there is at Newcastle: how plainly the badge of Christianity, LOVE, is there to be seen. When his lordship talked about ORDER, I begged leave to observe that I had nowhere seen such a want of it as in his own cathedral; the preacher so miserably at a loss that the children took notice of it; and the choristers so rude as to be talking and thrusting one another with their elbows. At last I told him there was need of some extraordinary messengers from God to call us back to the doctrines of the Reformation; for I did not know one of my brethren in Lancashire that would give the Church's definition of faith, and stand to it. And alas, I had sad experience of the same falling away in Cheshire; for one of his son's curates would not let me preach for him, because of that definition of faith."

In the ensuing year Mr. Wesley continued his labours and travels, with the same vigour and diligence, through various parts of England and Ireland.—February, 1753, he makes the following observations; "I now looked over Mr. Prince's History. What an amazing difference is there in the manner wherein God has carried on his work in England and in America! There, above a hundred of the established clergy, men of age and experience, and of the greatest note for sense and learning in those parts, are zealously engaged in the work. Here, almost the whole body of aged, experienced, learned clergy, are zealously engaged against it; and few, but a handful, of raw young men engaged in it, without name, learning, or eminent sense! And yet by that large number of honourable men, the work seldom flourished above six months at a time, and then followed a lamentable and general decay before the next revival of it; whereas that which God hath wrought by these despised instruments has continually increased for fifteen years together; and at whatever time it has declined in any one place, it has more eminently flourished in others."

To know the whole of a man's character, it is not sufficient to view him as he appears before the public, but in his more retired moments, and particularly in his private correspondence. The two following letters will show the temper in which Mr. Wesley answered charges that were privately brought against him, either from prejudice or misapprehension. "You give," says he, "five reasons why the Rev. Mr. P. will come no more

amongst us: 1. 'Because we despise the ministers of the church of England.' This I flatly deny. I am answering letters this very post which bitterly blame me for just the contrary. 2. 'Because so much backbiting and evilspeaking is suffered among our people.'—It is not suffered: all possible means are used, both to prevent and remove it. 3. 'Because I, who have written so much against hoarding up money, have put out seven hundred pounds to interest.'—I never put sixpence out to interest since I was born nor had I ever one hundred pounds together, my own, since I came into the world. 4. 'Because our lay-preachers have told many stories of my brother and me.'—If they did, I am sorry for them: when I hear the particulars I can answer, and, perhaps, make those ashamed who believed them.' 5. 'Because we did not help a friend in distress.'—We did help him as far as we were able.—'But we might have made his case known to Mr. G., Lady H., &c.'—So we did more than once; but we could not pull money from them whether they would or no. Therefore, these reasons are of no weight.'—You conclude with praying, 'that God would remove pride and malice from amongst us.—Of *pride*, I have too much; of *malice*, I have none: however, the prayer is good, and I thank you for it."

The other letter, from which I shall give an extract, was written apparently to a gentleman of some rank and influence. "Some time since," says Mr. Wesley, "I was considering what you said concerning the want of a plan in our societies. There is a good deal of truth in this remark. For though we have a plan as to our spiritual economy, (the several branches of which are particularly recited in the *Plain Account of the People called Methodists,)* yet it is certain, we have barely the first outlines of a plan with regard to our temporal concerns. The reason is, I had no design for several years to concern myself with temporals at all; and when I began to do this it was wholly and solely with a view to relieve, not employ, the poor; except now and then, with respect to a small number; and even this I found was too great a burden for me, as requiring more money, more time, and more thought, 'than I could possibly spare.' I say 'than I could possibly spare;' for the whole weight lay on me. If I left it to others it surely came to nothing. They wanted either understanding, or industry, or love, or patience, to bring any thing to perfection.

"Thus far I thought it needful to explain myself with regard to the economy of our society. I am still to speak of your case, of my own, and of some who are dependant upon me.

"I do not recollect, for I kept no copy of my last, that I charged you with want of humility or meekness. Doubtless, these may be found in the most splendid palaces. But did they ever move a man to build a splendid palace? Upon what motive you did this I know not; but you are to answer it to God, not to me.

"If your soul is as much alive to God, if your thirst after pardon and holiness is as strong, if you are as dead to the desire of the eye and the pride of life, as you were six or seven years ago, I rejoice; if not, I pray God you may; and then you will know how to value a real friend.

"With regard to myself, you do well to 'warn me against popularity, a thirst of power and of applause; against envy, producing a seeming contempt for the conveniences or grandeur of this life; against an affected humility; against sparing from myself to give to others from no other motive than ostentation.' I am not conscious to myself that this is my case. However, the warning is always friendly; and it is always seasonable, considering how deceitful my heart is, and how many the enemies that surround me.—What follows I do not understand: 'You behold me in the ditch wherein you helped, though innocently, to cast me, and with a *Levitical* pity passing by on the other side.'—'He and you, sir, have not any merit, though Providence should permit all these sufferings to work together for my good.'—I do not comprehend one line of this, and therefore cannot plead either guilty or not guilty.—I presume they are some that are dependant on me, 'who,' you say, 'keep not the commandments of God; who show a repugnance to serve and obey; who are as full of pride and arrogance as of filth and nastiness; who do not pay lawful debts nor comply with civil obligations; who make the waiting on the offices of religion a plea for sloth and idleness; who, after I had strongly recommended them, did not perform their moral duty, but increased the number of those encumbrances which they forced on you against your will.'—To this I can only say, 1. I know not whom you mean; I am not certain that I can so much as guess at one of them. 2. Whoever they are, had they followed my

instructions they would have acted in a quite different manner. 3. If you will tell me them by name I will renounce all fellowship with them."—That is, after due inquiry. This I must add; for I am certain he would not have renounced fellowship with the poorest man in the world to please the greatest king.

CHAPTER IV

MR. WESLEY'S DANGEROUS ILLNESS—MR. C. WESLEY'S RENEWED LABOURS—MR. WESLEY'S REASSUMPTION OF ITINERANCY—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE REV. MR. WALKER, OF TRURO—HIS PROPOSAL FOR A UNION OF THE EVANGELICAL CLERGY OF THAT DAY.—ACCOUNT OF MR. GRIMSHAW.

Mr. Wesley had hitherto enjoyed remarkable health, considering his great and continued labours and exposures of every kind. But, October 19, 1753, soon after his return to London he was taken ill. In a short time his complaint put on the appearance of an ague. Before he was perfectly recovered he repeatedly catched cold, and was presently threatened with a rapid consumption.—November 26, Dr. Fothergill told him he must not stay in town one day longer: that if any thing would do him good it must be the country air, with rest, asses' milk, and riding daily. In consequence of this advice he retired to Lewisham, to the house of his friend Mr. Blackwell, the banker. Here, not knowing how it might please God to dispose of him, and wishing "to prevent vile panegyric" in case of death, he wrote as follows:

HERE LIETH
THE BODY OF JOHN WESLEY,
A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING:
WHO DIED OF A CONSUMPTION IN THE FIFTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS AGE;
NOT LEAVING, AFTER HIS DEBTS ARE PAID, TEN POUNDS BEHIND HIM;
PRAYING,
God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant!

He ordered that this inscription, if any, should be placed on his tombstone.

From Lewisham he removed to the Hot-wells near Bristol, where it pleased God, in answer to the prayers of thousands, to renew his strength and to enable him again to declare his truth. This he did at first to a few persons at his apartments in the evenings; the Lord thus preparing him for his usual labours, to which he soon after returned. He was confined upon the whole about four months. Part of this time he employed in writing *Notes on the New Testament*, a work which he had long purposed to undertake, but for which he never could find time before. "I now," says he, "can neither travel nor preach; but, blessed be God, I can still read, write, and think: O that it may be to his glory!"

While Mr. Wesley was confined he received the following letter from Mr. Whitefield, which is so expressive of the high opinion which that great and good man entertained of him, and so honourable to his own piety and feelings, that I make no apology for inserting it:

"*Bristol, Dec.* 3, 1753.

"REVEREND AND VERY DEAR SIR,

"If seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the news and prospect of your approaching dissolution hath quite weighed me down. I pity myself and the church, but not you. A radiant throne awaits you, and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy. Yonder he stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels. But I, poor I, that have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind to grovel here below! Well! this is my comfort: it cannot be long ere the chariots will be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain them, even you, reverend and very dear sir, shall not leave us yet: but if the decree is gone forth, that you must now fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love! If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, reverend and very dear sir, f—a—r—e—w—e—ll! *Ego sequar, etsi non passibus æquis.** My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and you are, I fear, too weak for me to enlarge. Un-

* I shall follow, though not with equal steps.

derneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms! I commend you to his never-failing mercy, and am,

"Reverend and very dear Sir,
"Your most affectionate, sympathizing,
"And afflicted younger brother
"In the gospel of our common Lord,
"G. WHITEFIELD."

Mr. C. Wesley was roused by his brother's illness, and exerted himself to supply his place. Sunday, July 14, he came to Norwich, and at seven o'clock in the morning took the field. He preached on Hog-hill to about two thousand hearers, his brother standing by him, then in some degree amended in his health. A drunkard or two were troublesome, but more out of mirth than malice. They afterward went to church; and the people, both in the streets and at the cathedral, were remarkably civil. He adds, "The lessons, psalms, epistles, and gospel, were very encouraging. The anthem made our hearts rejoice: 'O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces! For my brethren and companions' sake will I now say, Peace be within thee! Because of the house of the Lord our God, will I seek thy good.'—We received the sacrament at the hands of the bishop. In the afternoon I went to St. Peter's, and at five o'clock to Hog-hill, where it was computed that ten thousand persons were present. Again I preached repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They listened with great seriousness—their hearts were plainly touched, as some showed by their tears. Who could have thought the people of Norwich would ever more have borne a field preacher? It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. To him be all the glory, who saith, 'I will work, and who shall hinder?'"

July 19. Mr. John Wesley left them, and Mr. Charles continued his labours. "At night," he says, "I had multitudes of the great vulgar and the small to hear me, with three justices and nine clergymen. Many, I am persuaded, felt the sharp twoedged sword. Sunday, July 21. My audience at seven in the morning was greatly increased. I dwelt chiefly on those words, 'He hath sent me to preach glad tidings to the meek,'

or poor; and laboured, as all last week, to bring them to a sense of their wants; and for this end I have preached the law, which is extremely wanted here. It is a cause for wonder and thanksgiving, that they can endure sound and even severe doctrine. I received the sacrament again from his lordship, among a score of communicants. If the gospel prevail in this place, they will, by and by, find the difference.—July 22. God is providing us a place, an old large brewhouse, which the owner, a justice of the peace, has reserved for us. He has refused several, always declaring he would let it to none but Mr. John Wesley. Last Saturday Mr. Edwards agreed, in my brother's name, to take a lease for seven years; and this morning Mr. S. has sent his workmen to begin to put it into repair. The people are much pleased at our having it: so are not Satan and his Antinomian apostles."

July 27. He was informed of the death of a person whom he considered and loved as a son in the gospel, but whose unsteadiness had given him great pain. His observations on the occasion show that he had a mind susceptible of the finest sentiments of friendship. "Just now," says he, "I hear from Leeds that my poor rebellious son has taken his flight. But God healed his backslidings first, and he is at rest! My poor J. H—n is at rest in the bosom of his heavenly Father. O what a turn has it given my heart! What a mixture of passions do I feel here! But joy and thankfulness are uppermost. I opened the book of consolation, and cast my eye upon a word which shall wipe away all tears: 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.'—Sunday, July 28, I met our little society, or rather candidates for a society, at five in the morning. At seven I preached Christ Jesus, the Saviour of all men, to a numerous quiet congregation, and afterward heard the bishop preach, and received the sacrament from him. At five in the evening, after prayer for an open door, I went forth to such a multitude as we have not seen before in Norwich. During the hymn a pale trembling opposer laboured to interrupt the work of God, and draw off the people's attention: but as soon as I began to read the history of the prodigal son, his commission ended, and he left me to a quiet audience. Now the door was opened indeed. For an hour and a half I showed their sins and wanderings

from God, and invited them back to their Father's house. And surely he had compassion on them, inclining many hearts to return. God, I plainly found, had delivered them into my hand. He filled my mouth with persuasive words, and my heart with strong desires for their salvation. I concluded, and began again, testifying my goodwill toward them, which was the sole end of my coming. But if I henceforth see them no more, yet is my labour with my God. They have heard words whereby they may be saved; and many of them, I cannot doubt, will be our crown of rejoicing in the great day. Several serious persons followed me to Mr. Edwards's, desiring to be admitted into our society. I told them, as others before, to come among us first for some time and see how they liked it. We spent some time together in conference, praise, and prayer. I am in no haste for a society: first, let us see how the candidates live."—But, I would ask, are we not to help them to live? Mr. John Wesley, speaking on this subject, says, "What am I to wait for? To see if the man *repents?* That, perhaps, is evident. If so, am I not to help him in every way that I can, lest he *turn back to perdition?*"

Mr. C. Wesley goes on: "July 30. I preached at five, and found the people's hearts opened for the word. The more Satan rages the more our Lord will own and bless us. A poor rebel at the conclusion lifted up his voice; for whom I first prayed; and then, turning full upon him, preached repentance and Christ to his heart. I desired him to turn his face toward me, but he could not. However, he felt the invisible chain which held him to hear the offers of grace and salvation. I have great hope that Satan has lost his slave; some assured me they saw him depart in tears.—July 31. I expounded Isaiah xxxii, 1, to my constant hearers, who seem more and more to know their wants. At night I laid the axe to the root, and showed their actual and original corruption, from Rev. iii, 17: 'Thou sayest, I am rich, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' The strong man was disturbed in his palace and roared on every side. My strength increased with the opposition. A gentleman on horseback, with others, was ready to gnash upon me with his teeth; but my voice prevailed, and they retreated to their strong hold the alehouse. There, with difficulty, they procured some butchers to appear in their

quarrel: but they had no commission to approach till I had done. Then, in the last hymn, they made up to the table with great fury. The foremost often lifted up his stick to strike me, being within his reach; but he was not permitted. I staid to pray for them, and walked quietly to my lodgings. Poor Rabshakeh muttered something about the bishop of Exeter; but did not accept of my invitation to Mr. Edwards's. The concern and love of the people were much increased by my supposed danger. We joined together in prayer and thanksgiving, as usual, and I slept in peace."

After a considerable time, in which we have no account of his labours, we find Mr. C. Wesley at York. He observes, "October 2, 1756. The whole day was spent in singing, conference, and prayer. I attended," says he, "the quire service. The people there were marvellously civil, and obliged me with the anthem I desired, (Hab. iii,) *a feast for a king*! as queen Anne called it. The Rev. Mr. Williamson walked with me to his house in the face of the sun. I would have spared him, but he was quite above fear. A pious sensible Dissenter cleaved to us all day and accompanied us to the preaching. I discoursed on my favourite subject, 'I will bring the third part through the fire.' We glorified God in the fire, and rejoiced in hope of coming forth as gold.

"Sunday, October 3. From five till eight in the morning I talked closely with each of the society: then, at Mr. Williamson's request, I preached on the ordinances from Isaiah lxiv, 5, 'In those is continuance and we shall be saved.' I dwelt longest on what had been most neglected, family prayer, public prayer, and the sacrament. The Lord set to his seal and confirmed the word with a double blessing.—I received the sacrament at the minster. They were obliged to consecrate twice, the congregation being doubled and trebled through my exhortation and example. Glory be to God alone!—I went to Mr. Williamson's church, who read prayers as one who felt them, and then beckoned me. I stepped up into the pulpit, when no one expected it, and cried to a full audience, 'The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.' They were all attention. The word did not return void, but accomplished that for which it was sent. 'Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth.'"

October 11. Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Grimshaw were present at a watchnight at Leeds. Mr. C. Wesley preached first, and Mr. Whitefield after him. It was a time of great solemnity, and of great rejoicing in hope of the glorious appearing of the great God.—He now left Leeds, but continued preaching in the neighbouring places a few days. At Birstal he makes the following observation: "The word was clothed with power, both to awaken and to confirm. My principal concern is for the disciples, that their houses may be built on the rock before the rains descend. I hear in most places the effect of the word; but I hearken after it less than formerly, and take little notice of those who say they receive comfort, or faith, or forgiveness. Let their fruits show it."—But why should we *take little notice of them?* Ought we not to rejoice in hope that fruit will follow? And this I know he did do. He was far from the apathy into which some have been led by the Mystic Theology, though some of his short sentences may look like it.

October 17. He talked largely with Mr. Grimshaw, how to remedy the evil which threatened them. "We agreed," says he, "1. That nothing can save the Methodists from falling a prey to every seducer but close walking with God in all the commandments and ordinances; especially reading the word, and prayer, private, family, and public.—2. That the preachers should be allowed more time in every place to visit from house to house, after Mr. Baxter's manner.—3. That a small treatise should be written to ground them in their calling and preserve them against seducers, and be lodged in every family."—These remedies were certainly very obvious.

Mr. C. Wesley wrote from Manchester to the society at Leeds as follows:

"*To my beloved brethren at Leeds, &c.*

"Grace and peace be multiplied! I thank my God on your behalf for the grace which is given unto you, by which ye stand fast in one mind and in one spirit. My Master, I am persuaded, sent me to you at this time to confirm your souls in the present truth—in your calling, in the old paths of gospel ordinances. O that ye may be a pattern to the flock for your unanimity and love! O that ye may continue steadfast in the word, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

(private, family, and public,) till we all meet around the great white throne!—I knew before hand that the Sanballats and Tobiahs would be grieved when they heard there was a man come to seek the good of the church of England. I expected they would pervert my words, as if I should say, *The Church could save you.* So, indeed, you and they thought, till I and my brethren taught you better; and sent you, in and through all the means, to Jesus Christ; but let not their slanders move you. Continue in the Old Ship. Jesus hath a favour for our church, and is wonderfully visiting and reviving his work in her. It shall be shortly said, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.' Blessed be God, you see your calling. Let nothing hinder you from going constantly to church and sacrament.* Read the Scriptures daily in your families, and let there be a church in every house. The word is able to build you up; and if ye watch and pray always ye shall be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man. Watch ye, therefore, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong: let all your things be done in love. I rejoice in hope of presenting you all in that day. Look up, for your eternal salvation draweth near.

CHARLES WESLEY."

"I examined more of the society. Most of them have known the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"October 30. I dined with my candid friend and censor Dr. Byrom. I stood close to Mr. Clayton (one of the first Methodists at Oxford) in the church, as all the week past; but not a look would he cast toward me, 'so stiff was his parochial pride,' and so faithfully did he keep his covenant with his eyes not to look upon an old friend when called a Methodist!

"October 31. I spake with the rest of the classes. I refused tickets to J. and E. R. All the rest were willing to follow my advice and go to church and sacrament. *The Dissenters I sent to their respective meetings.*"†—Dr. Whitehead observes, "These extracts from Mr. Charles Wesley's journal for the

* And they continued to do so till no church there could admit one third of them. Any that choose continue to go to church: the original terms of Christian fellowship remain to this day.

† Dr. Whitehead puts these words in italics and then eulogizes them. The words are easily spoken; but where was the authority? Not in any of the rules of Methodism. No such coercive power is there assumed! And certainly there is no such

present year show, in the clearest light, that he had a just view of the peculiar calling of the Methodists, and that he was exceedingly anxious they should abide in it. He was fully convinced that all attempts to form the people into an independent body originated in the pride and selfishness of some of the preachers, and would be injurious to the progress of the work. He saw, however, that under various pretences the preachers would finally prevail and obtain their purpose, though not during the life of his brother. He was still comforted with the hope that whenever such an event should take place there would be found, perhaps, a third part of the people in the societies who would have judgment and virtue enough left to withstand it, and continue a connexion on the original plan. "How far his expectations will be realized time must discover."—And time has discovered it. All these prophecies have failed; and only the record of these evil surmises remains.

November 1. Mr. C. Wesley left Manchester, and on the 6th came safe to his friends at Bristol. "This," says Dr. Whitehead, "I believe was the last journey he ever took through any considerable part of the kingdom."—He afterward divided his labours chiefly between London and Bristol, and continued to preach till within a short time of his death: but he still made short excursions, and thus occasionally visited the old societies. But as he did not enter into the work as at the beginning, his extreme spirit of caution, for which he was noted, was now mixed with a jealousy which greatly impeded the success of his labours and lessened his own comfort. He heard how widely the work was spreading, and seems to have imbibed a fear that order and sobriety could not be maintained in so great a body: those pious men, Newton and Scott, have expressed the same

authority given to man in the Holy Scripture. Have even the angels of God authority to constrain the sheep of Christ 'to follow the voice of a stranger?' No; their Master says, 'they will not follow it: they know not the voice of strangers.' And how many of these were strangers to the gospel, and to the whole power of godliness?—and not a few 'denied the God that bought them.' Meantime, if any *chose* to attend the ministry which they were used to, they had liberty so to do, as they have at this day. Such a power would soon wear itself out. The fact is, it was not attended to. Mr. C. Wesley staid but a short time in each place; and when he departed every thing went on as usual; and the *religious societies*, freed from this compulsive dictation, continued to build each other up in their most holy faith, to which his lively and powerful preaching mightily contributed. I have given the surmises of Dr. Whitehead to show how he could vary from his own wellknown sentiments when writing for a party.

opinion. He frequently strove to induce his brother to adopt his straitened views: but Mr. J. Wesley, who visited every place, and saw with his own eyes, rejoiced in beholding those fruits that still evidenced the work to be of God. He went on therefore in the same faith, and maintained the same joyful hope, according to that saying of Mr. Fletcher, "We need not fear a wreck, however tossed, while Christ is in the ship."

May 6, 1755, the conference began at Leeds. "The point," says Mr. Wesley, "on which we desired all the preachers to speak their minds at large was, *Whether we ought to separate from the Church?* Whatever was advanced on one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered; and on the third day we were *all* fully agreed in that general conclusion, *That, whether it was* LAWFUL *or not, it was no ways* EXPEDIENT."—'In a multitude of counsellors there is safety.'

Mr. Wesley proceeds: "August 6. I mentioned to our congregation in London a means of increasing serious religion which had been frequently practised by our forefathers, the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart and with all our soul. I explained this for several mornings following, and on Friday many of us kept a fast unto the Lord, beseeching him to give us wisdom and strength that we might 'promise unto the Lord our God and keep it.'—On Monday, at six in the evening, we met for that purpose at our chapel in Spitalfields. After I had recited the tenour of the covenant proposed in the words of that blessed man, Richard Alleine, all the people stood up, in token of assent, to the number of about eighteen hundred. Such a night I scarce ever knew before. Surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever."—The covenant has been renewed once every year since this period. The practice is now become general.

January, 1756. The common expectation of public calamities in the ensuing year spread a general seriousness over the nation. "We endeavoured," says Mr. Wesley, "in every part of the kingdom to avail ourselves of the apprehensions which we frequently found it was impossible to remove, in order to make them conducive to a nobler end, to that 'fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.' And at this season I wrote '*An Address to the Clergy*,' which, considering the situation of public affairs, I judged would be more seasonable and more easily borne at this time than at any other.

"February 6. The fastday was a glorious day: every church in the city was more than full: and a solemn seriousness sat on every face. Surely God heareth the prayer! and there will yet be a *lengthening of our tranquillity*.—Even the Jews observed this day with a peculiar solemnity. The form of prayer which was used in their synagogue began 'Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal us;' and concluded with those remarkable words: 'Incline the heart of our sovereign lord, king George, as well as the hearts of his lords and counsellors, to use us kindly and all our brethren the children of Israel: that in his days and in our days we may see the restoration of Judah, and that Israel may dwell in safety and the Redeemer may come to Zion. May it be thy will! And we all say, AMEN!'"

Mr. Wesley always supposed that God's design in raising up the Methodists, so called, was, "To reform the nation, especially the Church; and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land. He therefore still greatly wished that the clergy would co-operate with him; or at least favourably receive those who in their several parishes were turned from ignorance and profaneness to true religion. This in general was not the case. However, some were of a better mind. The late Mr. Walker, of Truro in Cornwall, and a few others, not only loved and preached the gospel, but were well disposed toward him and those under his care. Some of these gentlemen assisted at the first conferences. But after a few years they seemed unwilling to share in his reproach. To avoid this, they desired that he would give up his societies which were formed in their respective parishes into their care. As this proposal involves a question which, it has sometimes been thought, he could not easily answer, namely, "If you love the Church why do not you give up your people to those in the Church whom you yourself believe to be real ministers of Christ?" I shall insert his reply to the above-mentioned gentleman, who wrote to him on the subject in behalf of himself and his brethren.

"*Helstone, Cornwall, Sept.* 16, 1757.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"Nothing can be more kind than the mentioning to me whatever you think is amiss in my conduct. And the more

freedom you use in doing this the more I am indebted to you. I am thoroughly persuaded that you 'wish me well;' and that it is this, together with a 'concern for the common interests of religion,' which obliges you to speak with more plainness than otherwise you would. The same motives induce me to lay aside all reserve and tell you the naked sentiments of my heart.

"You say, 'If you believed Mr. Vowler to be a gracious person and a gospel minister, why did you not, in justice to your people, leave them to him?'

"J. H. assured me that Mr. Vowler had a clear conviction of his being reconciled to God. If so, I could not deny his being a gracious person. And I heard him preach the *true*, though not the *whole* gospel. But had it been the whole, there are several reasons still why I did not give up the people to him.—1. No one mentioned or intimated any such thing, nor did it once enter into my thoughts.—But if it had, 2. I do not know that every one who preaches the truth has wisdom and experience to govern a flock: I do not know that Mr. Vowler in particular has. He may, or he may not.—3. I do not know whether he would or could give that flock all the advantages for holiness which they now enjoy: and to leave them to him, before I was assured of this, would be neither justice nor mercy.—4. Unless *they* were also assured of this they could not in conscience give up themselves to him. And I have neither right nor power to dispose of them contrary to their conscience.*

"'But they are his already by legal establishment.' If they receive the sacrament from him thrice a year, and attend his ministrations on the Lord's day, I see no more which the law requires. But, to go a little deeper into this matter of *legal establishment*. Does Mr. Conon or you think that the king and parliament have a right to prescribe to me what pastor I shall use? If they prescribe one which I know God never sent, am I *obliged* to receive him? If he be sent of God can I receive him with a clear conscience till I know he is? And even when I do, if I believe my former pastor is more profitable to my soul, can

* Such was the difference between the two brothers! Much has been said of the authority assumed by Mr. Wesley over his people. But he never attempted to use such authority as we have seen his pious brother exercise, (page 161,) and which Dr. Whitehead so much applauds. He only required that they should observe the rules to which they assented when they joined him.

I leave him without sin? Or has any man living a right to require this of me?

"'I extend this to every gospel minister in England.' Before I could with a clear conscience leave a Methodist society even to such a one, all these considerations must come in.

"And, with regard to the people: far from thinking that 'the withdrawing our preachers from such a society without their consent' would prevent a separation from the church, I think it would be the direct way to cause it. While we are with them our advice has weight and keeps them to the church. But were we totally to withdraw it would be of little or no weight. Nay, perhaps, resentment of our unkindness (as it would appear to them) would prompt them to act in flat opposition to it.

"Again, you say, 'Before a union can be effected something must be done on your part.' Tell me what, and I will do it without delay, however contrary it may be to my ease or natural inclination: provided only, that it consists with my keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. It would not consist with this, to give up the flock under my care to any other minister till I and they were convinced they would have the same advantages for holiness under him which they now enjoy.

"But 'paying us visits can serve no other purpose than to bring us under needless difficulties.' I will speak very freely on this head. Can our conversing together serve no other purpose? You seem then not to have the least conception of *your own* want of any such thing! But whether you do or not, I feel my want: I am not *in memet totus teres atque rotundus.** I want more light, more strength, for my personal walking with God. And I know not but he may give it through you. And whether you do or no, I want more light and strength for guiding the flock committed to my charge. May not the Lord send this also by whom he will send? And by you as probably as by any other? It is not improbable that he may by you give me clearer light, either as to doctrine or discipline. And even hereby how much comfort and profit might redound to thousands of those for whom Christ hath died? Which, I apprehend, would abundantly compensate any *difficulties* that might arise from such conversation.

* I am not all-sufficient.

"'I speak as a fool:' bear with me. I am clearly satisfied that you have far more faith, more love, and more of the mind which was in Christ, than I have. But have you more gifts for the work of God? or more fruit of your labour? Has God owned you more? I would he had a thousand fold! I pray God, that he may! Have you at present more experience of the wisdom of the world and the devices of Satan? Or of the manner and method wherein it pleases God to counterwork them in this period of his providence? Are you sure that God would add nothing to you by me besides what he might add to me by you? Perhaps when the time is slipt out of your hands, when I am no more seen, you may wish you had not rejected the assistance of even

"Your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"*To the Rev. Mr. Walker, in Truro.*"

That he sincerely wished to unite with every minister of the church of England who lived and preached the gospel, is evident from his whole behaviour toward them, and from many passages in his journals. A few years after the above correspondence with Mr. Walker he wrote to all those clergymen who he believed answered the above description, proposing in the fulness of his heart that they should unite to forward the real work of God in the souls of men. His letter upon that occasion is as follows:

"REVEREND SIR,

"Near two years and a half ago I wrote the following letter. You will please to observe, 1. That I propose no more therein than is the bounden duty of every Christian: 2. That *you* may comply with this proposal whether any other does or not. I myself have endeavoured so to do for many years, though I have been almost alone therein; and although many, the more earnestly I 'talk of peace,' the more zealously 'make themselves ready for battle.'

"I am, reverend sir,

"Your affectionate brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

'DEAR SIR,

"It has pleased God to give you both the will and the power to do many things for his glory, although you are often ashamed you have done so little, and wish you could do a thousand times more. This induces me to mention to you what has been upon my mind for many years, and what I am persuaded would be much for the glory of God if it could once be effected. And I am in great hopes it will be if you heartily undertake it, trusting in him alone.

"Some years since God began a great work in England: but the labourers were few. At first those few were of one heart: but it was not so long. First one fell off, then another, and another, till no two of us were left together in the work besides my brother and me. This prevented much good and occasioned much evil. It grieved our spirits and weakened our hands. It gave our common enemies huge occasion to blaspheme. It perplexed and puzzled many sincere Christians. It caused many to draw back to perdition. It 'grieved the Holy Spirit of God.'

"As labourers increased, disunion increased, offences were multiplied. And instead of coming nearer to, they stood farther and farther off from each other; till at length those who were not only brethren in Christ, but fellow labourers in his gospel, had no more connexion or fellowship with each other than Protestants have with Papists.

"But ought this so to be? Ought not those who are united to one Common Head, and employed by him in one common work, to be united to each other? I speak now of those labourers who are ministers of the church of England. These are chiefly Mr. Perronet, Romaine, Newton, Shirley: Mr. Downing, Jesse, Adam: Mr. Talbot, Ryland, Stillingfleet, Fletcher: Mr. Johnson, Baddeley, Andrews, Jane: Mr. Hart, Symons, Brown, Rouquet. Mr. Sellon, Venn, Richardson, Burnet, Fawley, Crook: Mr. Eastwood, Conyers, Bentley, King, Mr. Berridge, Hicks: George Whitefield, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Richardson, Benjamin Colley. Not excluding any other clergymen who agree in these essentials,

"I. ORIGINAL SIN,

"II. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

"III. HOLINESS OF HEART AND LIFE: provided their life be answerable to their doctrine.

"'But *what* union would you desire among these?'—Not a union in *opinions*. They might agree or disagree, touching absolute decrees on the one hand and perfection on the other.—Not a union in *expressions*. These may still speak of the *imputed righteousness*, and those of the *merits* of Christ.—Not a union with regard to *outward order*. Some may still remain *quite regular*; some *quite irregular*; and some *partly regular* and *partly irregular*. But these things being as they are, as each is persuaded in his own mind, is it not a most desirable thing that we should

"1. REMOVE HINDERANCES OUT OF THE WAY? Not *judge* one another, not *despise* one another, not *envy* one another? Not be *displeased* at one another's *gifts* or *success*, even though greater than our own? Not wait for another's halting, much less *wish* for it, or *rejoice* therein?

"Never *speak* disrespectfully, slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other; never *repeat* each other's faults, mistakes, or infirmities, much less *listen* for and *gather* them up. Never say or do any thing to hinder each other's usefulness, either directly or indirectly?

"Is it not a most desirable thing that we should, 2. LOVE AS BRETHREN? *Think well* of and *honour* one another? *Wish* all good, all grace, all gifts, all success, yea, greater than our own, to each other? *Expect* God will answer our wish, *rejoice* in every appearance thereof, and *praise* him for it? *Readily believe* good of each other, as readily as we once believed evil?

"*Speak* respectfully, honourably, kindly of each other; *defend* each other's character? Speak all the good we can of each other: recommend one another where we have influence: each *help* the other on in his work, and *enlarge* his influence by all the honest means we can?

"This is the *union* which I have long sought after. And is it not the duty of every one of us so to do? Would it not be far better for *ourselves?* A means of promoting both our holiness and happiness? Would it not remove much *guilt* from those who have been faulty in any of these instances? And much *pain* from those who have kept themselves pure? Would it not be far better for the *people*, who suffer severely from the clash-

ings and contentions of their leaders, which seldom fail to occasion many unprofitable, yea, hurtful disputes among them? Would it not be better even for the poor, blind *world*, robbing them of their sport, 'O! they cannot agree among themselves!' Would it not be better for the *whole work* of God, which would then deepen and widen on every side?

"'But it will never be: it is utterly impossible!' Certainly, it is *with men*. Who imagines *we* can do this? That it can be effected by any *human power?* All nature is against it, every infirmity, *every wrong temper and passion;* love of honour and praise, of power, of pre-eminence; of anger, resentment, pride; long contracted habits, and prejudice lurking in ten thousand forms.* The *devil* and all his angels are against it. For if this takes place, how shall his kingdom stand? All *the world*, all that know not God are against it, though they may seem to favour it for a season. Let us settle this in our hearts that we may be utterly cut off from all dependance on our own strength or wisdom.

"But, surely, 'with God all things are possible.' Therefore, 'all things are possible to him that believeth.' And this union is proposed only to them that believe, that show *their* faith by *their* works.

"When Mr. C. was objecting the impossibility of ever effecting such a union I went up stairs, and after a little prayer, opened Kempis on these words:

"*Expecta Dominum: viriliter age: noli diffidere: noli discedere; sed corpus et animam expone constanter pro gloria Dei.*†

"I am, dear sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"*Scarborough, April* 29, 1764."

Of thirty-four clergymen to whom he addressed the above, only three vouchsafed him an answer! The one which he received from the late vicar of Shoreham in Kent is such a picture of that blessed man, (now with God,) that I doubt not it will be acceptable to my readers.

* Most certainly only the principle of *perfect love* will bear such fruit.

† "Wait upon the Lord: play the man: doubt not: shrink not: but sacrifice soul and body continually for the glory of God."

Shoreham, April, 30, 1764.

"MY REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,

"Yours of the 29th instant gave me both pain and pleasure.

"I was highly delighted with your ardent wishes and endeavours for promoting the spirit of the gospel among the preachers and other professors of it; but deeply concerned at the disappointment and opposition you have met with!

"It has been always a leading principle with me (and I pray God confirm and strengthen it more and more) to love all those labourers of Christ, who give proof by their diligence, their holy and heavenly behaviour, that they 'love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;' even though their sentiments in many things should differ from mine.

"And therefore, though it be absurd to expect an entire union of *sentiments* in all things; yet the endeavouring by every Christian method to 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' is the indispensible duty of all Christians. Where this spiritual peace and union are not, there 'faith working by love,' is not: and where this divine faith is wanting, there Christ is wanting: there his Spirit is wanting: and then, 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision will avail us any thing!'

"In this melancholy situation, whilst we are strangers to the divine fruits of the Holy Spirit, let our gifts and talents be what they may, let us 'speak with the tongues of men and of angels;' we are yet *nothing* in the sight of God! Nay, though his Spirit should spread the gospel, by our ministry, in the hearts of thousands; yet our own souls will remain but a barren wilderness! and Christ may say, 'I never knew you!'

"How ought we, therefore, always to pray that the 'peace of God may ever rule in our hearts;' that we may be 'rooted and grounded in love;' and that we may constantly 'follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another!'

"This is the gospel of Jesus Christ: and may God impress it thoroughly upon the minds and hearts of all! And may the poor despised flock 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!'

"I am, dear sir,

"Yours most affectionately,

"VINCENT PERRONET"

Mr. Hampson, in his Life of Mr. Wesley, mentions the above circular letter, (the only one he ever sent,) and the failure of the projected union; and then adds, "His only resource, therefore, was in lay-preachers." Must not his readers imagine from this observation, that those preachers were employed, subsequently to that proposal and to supply its failure? Whereas the real truth is, they were employed more than twenty years before the proposal was made! Besides, the very words of the letter clearly evidence that no such union was proposed as would make the least difference with respect to the preachers. It is therefore surprising that Mr. Hampson, who was himself employed as an itinerant preacher for several years, should deviate so much from the real truth. Many other particulars in the Life he has written are related with the same *fidelity* and *candour*.—This surprise, however, is now swallowed up in the passing strangeness of a writer who has reiterated the notion in a biography published in the year 1823!

Having spoken so little concerning the calling of those preachers who laboured with Mr. Wesley, being desirous my readers might chiefly attend to him whose memoirs I write, and to the great work in which he was engaged, I believe it will not be unacceptable to lay before them his thoughts on this subject after twenty years' trial. He has given them very fully in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Walker, of Truro, written about this time, which I here subjoin:

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"I have one point in view,—To promote, as far as I am able, vital, practical religion, and by the grace of God, to beget, preserve and increase the life of God in the souls of men. On this single principle I have hitherto proceeded, and taken no step but in subserviency to it. With this view, when I found it to be absolutely necessary for the continuance of the work which God had begun in many souls, (which their *regular pastors* generally used all possible means to destroy,) I permitted several of their brethren, whom I believe God had called thereto and qualified for the work, to comfort, exhort, and instruct those who were athirst for God, or who walked in the light of his countenance. But, as the persons so qualified were few, and those who wanted their assistance very many, it followed that most of

these were obliged to travel continually from place to place ; and this occasioned several regulations from time to time, which were chiefly made in our conferences.

"So great a blessing has from the beginning attended the labours of these itinerants, that we have been more and more convinced every year of the more than lawfulness of this proceeding. And the inconveniences, most of which we foresaw from the very first, have been both fewer and smaller than were expected. Rarely two in one year out of the whole number of preachers, have either separated themselves, or been rejected by us. A great majority have all along behaved as becometh the gospel of Christ, and, I am clearly persuaded, still desire nothing more than to spend and be spent for their brethren.

"But you advise, 'That as many of our preachers as are fit for it be ordained: and that the others be fixed to certain societies, not as preachers, but as readers or inspectors.'

"You oblige me by speaking your sentiments so plainly: with the same plainness I will answer. So far as I know myself, I have no more concern for the reputation of Methodism, or my own, than for the reputation of Prester John. I have the same point in view as when I set out, the promoting as I am able, vital, practical religion : and in all our discipline I still aim at the continuance of the work which God has already begun in so many souls. With this view, and this only, I permitted those whom I believed God had called thereto, to comfort, exhort, and instruct their brethren. And if this end can be better answered some other way I shall subscribe to it without delay.

"But is that which you propose a better way? This should be coolly and calmly considered.

"If I mistake not there are now in the county of Cornwall about four-and-thirty little societies, part of whom now experience the love of God : part are more or less earnestly seeking it. Four preachers, Peter Jaco, Thomas Johnson, William Crabb, and William Alwood, design, for the ensuing year, partly to call other sinners to repentance, but chiefly to feed and guide those few feeble sheep ; to forward them, as of the ability which God giveth, in vital practical religion.

"Now suppose we can effect, that Peter Jaco and Thomas Johnson be ordained and settled in the curacies of Buryan and St. Just : and suppose William Crabb and William Alwood fix

at Launceston and Plymouth Dock as readers and exhorters: will this answer the end which I have in view so well as travelling through the county?

"It will not answer it so well even with regard to those societies among whom Peter Jaco and Thomas Johnson are settled. Be their talents ever so great they will ere long grow dead themselves, and so will most of those that hear them. I know were I myself to preach one whole year in one place I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. Nor can I believe it was ever the will of our Lord that any congregation should have only one teacher. We have found, by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one talent, that another. No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation.

"But suppose this would better answer the end with regard to those two societies, would it answer in those where William Alwood and William Crabb were settled as inspectors or readers? First, who shall feed them with the milk of the word? The ministers of their parishes? Alas! they cannot: they themselves neither know, nor live, nor teach the gospel. These readers? Can then either they, or I, or you, always find something to *read* to our congregation, which will be as exactly adapted to their wants and as much blessed to them as *our preaching?* And here is another difficulty still: what authority have I to forbid their doing what I believe God has called them to do? I apprehend, indeed, that there ought, if possible, to be both an outward and inward call to this work: yet, if one of the two be supposed wanting, I had rather want the outward than the inward call. I rejoice that I am called to preach the gospel both by God and man. Yet I acknowledge, I had rather have the divine without the human, than the human without the divine call.

"But waving this, and supposing these four societies to be better provided for than they were before: what becomes of the other thirty? Will they prosper as well when they are left as sheep without a shepherd? The experiment has been tried again and again; and always with the same effect: even the strong in faith grew weak and faint: many of the weak made

shipwreck of the faith. The awakened fell asleep; sinners, changed for a while, returned as a dog to the vomit. And so by our lack of service, many of the souls perished for whom Christ died. Now, had we willingly withdrawn our service from them, by voluntarily settling in one place, what account of this could we have given to the Great Shepherd of all our souls?

"I cannot therefore see how any of those four preachers, or any other in like circumstances, can ever, while they have health and strength, ordained or unordained, fix in one place, without a grievous wound to their own conscience and damage to the *general work* of God. Yet I trust I am open to conviction; and your farther thoughts on this or any subject will be always acceptable to,

"Reverend and dear sir,

"Your affectionate brother and fellow-labourer,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"*To the Rev. Mr. Walker.*"

I cannot here omit mentioning that excellent and laborious minister, the late Mr. GRIMSHAW, rector of Haworth in Yorkshire, who about this time went to his reward. He was indeed a man of God. He heartily joined Mr. Wesley in his work; and was so great an instrument of promoting the revival in Yorkshire, that I shall be excused in giving Mr. Wesley's own account of his truly Christian life and apostolic labours.

"It was at this time that Mr. Grimshaw fell asleep. He was born September 3, 1708, at Brindle, six miles south of Preston in Lancashire, and educated at the schools of Blackburn and Heskin in the same county. Even then the thoughts of death and judgment made some impression upon him. At eighteen he was admitted at Christ's college in Cambridge. Here bad example so carried him away that for more than two years he seemed utterly to have lost all sense of seriousness; which did not revive till the day he was ordained deacon in the year 1731. On that day he was much affected with the sense of the importance of the ministerial office. And this was increased by his conversing with some at Rochdale who met once a week to read, and sing, and pray. But on his removal to Todmorden soon after, he quite dropped his pious acquaintance, conformed to the

world, followed all its diversions, and contented himself with 'doing his duty' on Sundays.

"But about the year 1734 he began to think seriously again. He left off all his diversions; he began to catechise the young people, to preach the absolute necessity of a devout life; and to visit his people, not in order to be merry with them as before, but to press them to seek the salvation of their souls.

"At this period also he began himself to pray in secret four times a day. And the God of all grace, who prepared his heart to pray, soon gave the answer to his prayer: not indeed as he expected; not in joy or peace, but by bringing upon him very strong and painful convictions of his own guilt and helplessness and misery: by discovering to him, what he did not suspect before, that 'his heart was deceitful and desperately wicked;' and, what was more afflicting still, that all his duties and labours could not procure him pardon or gain him a title to eternal life. In this trouble he continued more than three years, not acquainting any one with the distress he suffered; till one day (in 1742) being in the utmost agony of mind, there was clearly represented to him [to his mental eye] Jesus Christ pleading for him with God the Father and gaining a free pardon for him. In that moment all his fears vanished away, and he was filled with joy unspeakable. 'I was now,' says he, 'willing to renounce myself and to embrace Christ for my all in all. O what light and comfort did I enjoy in my own soul, and what a taste of the pardoning love of God!'

"All this time he was an entire stranger to the people called Methodists, whom afterward he thought it his duty to countenance, and to labour with in his neighbourhood. He was an entire stranger also to all their writings till he came to Haworth: and then the good effects of his preaching soon became visible. Many of his flock were brought into deep concern for salvation, and were in a little time after filled with peace and joy through believing. And, as in ancient times, the whole congregation have been often seen in tears on account of their provocations against God, and under a sense of his goodness in yet sparing them.

"His lively manner of representing the truths of God could not fail of being much talked of, and bringing many hundreds out of curiosity to Haworth church; who received so much benefit by what they heard, that when the novelty was long over

the church continued to be full of people, many of whom came from far, and this for twenty years together.

"Mr. Grimshaw was now too happy himself in the knowledge of Christ to rest satisfied without taking every method he thought likely to spread the knowledge of his God and Saviour. And as the very indigent constantly make *their want of better clothes to appear in* an excuse for not coming to church in the daytime, he contrived, for them chiefly, a lecture on Sunday evenings, though he had preached twice in the day before. God was pleased to give great success to these attempts, which animated him still more to spend and be spent for Christ. So the next year he began a method, which was continued by him for ever after, of preaching in each of the four hamlets he had under his care three times every month. By this means the old and infirm, who could not attend the church, had the truth of God brought to their houses; and many, who were so profane as to make the distance from the house of God a reason for scarce ever coming to it, were allured to hear. By this time the great labour with which he instructed his own people; the holiness of his conversation; and the benefit which very many from the neighbouring parishes had obtained by attending his ministry; concurred to bring upon him many earnest entreaties to come to their houses who lived in the neighbouring parishes, and to expound the word of God to souls as ignorant as they had been themselves. This request he did not dare to refuse: so that, while he provided abundantly for his own flock, he annually found opportunity of preaching nearly three hundred times to congregations in other parts.

"And for a course of fifteen years or upward he used to preach every week, fifteen, twenty, and sometimes thirty times, besides visiting the sick and other occasional duties of his function. It is not easy to ascribe such unwearied diligence, chiefly among the poor, to any motive but the real one. He thought he would never keep silence while he could speak to the honour of that God who had done so much for his soul. And while he saw sinners perishing for lack of knowledge, and no one breaking to them the bread of life, he was constrained, notwithstanding the reluctance he felt within, to give up his name to still greater reproach, as well as all his time and strength to the work of the ministry.

"During this intense application to what was the delight of his heart God was exceeding favourable to him. In sixteen years he was only once suspended from his labour by sickness, though he dared all weathers, upon the bleak mountains, and used his body with less compassion than a merciful man would use his beast. His soul at various times enjoyed large manifestations of God's love; and he drank deep into his Spirit. His cup ran over, and at some seasons his faith was so strong, and his hope so abundant, that higher degrees of spiritual delight would have overpowered his mortal frame.

"In this manner Mr. Grimshaw employed all his powers and talents even to his last illness: and his labours were not in vain in the Lord. He saw an effectual change take place in many of his flock; and a restraint from the commission of sin brought upon the parish in general. He saw the name of Jesus exalted, and many souls happy in the knowledge of him, and walking as became the gospel. Happy he was himself in being kept, by the power of God, unblamable in his conversation: happy, in being beloved in several of the last years of his life by every one in his parish; who, whether they would be persuaded by him to forsake the evil of their ways or no, had no doubt that Mr. Grimshaw was their cordial friend. Hence, at his departure a general concern was visible through his parish. Hence, his body was interred with what is more ennobling than all the pomp of a royal funeral: for he was followed to the grave by a great multitude with affectionate sighs and many tears; who cannot still hear his much-loved name without weeping for the guide of their souls, to whom each of them was dear as children to their father.

"His behaviour throughout his last sickness was of a piece with the last twenty years of his life. From the very first attack of his fever he welcomed its approach. His intimate knowledge of Christ abolished all the reluctance nature feels to a dissolution; and, triumphing in him who is the Resurrection and the Life, he departed April 7th, 1762, in the 55th year of his age and the twenty-first of his eminent usefulness."*

* The late Reverend Mr. Newton, several years after this, published a Life of Mr. Grimshaw, in which he gives him due honour; but, strange to say, he omits his connexion with Mr. Wesley! Must we account for this in the way that Mr. Wesley himself accounts for such conduct in other good men who had been, like Mr. Newton, his intimate friends and correspondents?—"He is fallen into the pit of the decrees, and knows me no more!"

The cordial and intimate friendship and union of ministerial labours, which for so many years subsisted between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Grimshaw, furnish high evidence of that catholic spirit which Mr. Wesley so incessantly cultivated and preserved. Mr. Grimshaw did not agree in every point of doctrine with Mr. Wesley; but he had so much of 'the wisdom from above,' that he was 'easy to be convinced' (ευπειθης,) of any truth, and easy to be 'persuaded' in any good way. This excellent spirit appeared in him upon all occasions, and is manifest in a letter which he wrote to Mr. Wesley concerning those differences which were indeed more in words than in judgment. The letter is dated July 23d, 1761. After apologizing for not attending the conference then held at Leeds, he observes, "The disappointment is more my own loss than yours: for there are several things which have for some time been matter of so much uneasiness to me, that I thought, could they not at this time be somehow accommodated, I should be obliged to recede from the connexion; which to do would have been one of the most disagreeable things in the world to me.—I would fain live and die in this happy relation I have for many years borne and still bear to you.

"Two of the most material points were concerning *imputed righteousness*, and *Christian perfection*. But as to the former, what you declared to be your notion of it at Heptonstal is so near mine that I am well satisfied.* And as to the other, your resolutions in conference are such, if John Emmot informs me right, as seem to afford me sufficient satisfaction.

"There are other matters more, but to me not of equal importance; to which, notwithstanding, I cannot be reconciled. Such as, asserting 'a child of God to be again a child of the devil if he give way to a temptation.—That *he* is a child of the devil *who* disbelieves the doctrine of *sinless perfection*.—That he is no true Christian who has not attained to it,'† &c. &c.—These are assertions very common with some of our preachers, though, in my apprehensions, too absurd and ridiculous to be regarded, and therefore by no means of equal importance with what is above said; and yet have a tendency, as the effect has already shown, to distract and divide our societies.—You will

* See the note in page 38.

† Uttered no doubt by warm men when disputing with Antinomians. Such contentions were very common in that day.

perhaps say, 'Why did you not admonish them? Why did you not endeavour to convince them of the error of such absurd assertions?'—In some degree I have, though perhaps not so fully or freely as I ought, or could have wished to have done: for I feared to be charged by them, perhaps secretly to yourself, with opposing them or their doctrines. These things I mentioned to brother Lee, who declared, and I could not but believe him, that you did and would utterly reject any such expressions. I am therefore in these respects more easy; and shall, if such occasions require [it,] as I wish they never may, reprove and prevent them with plainness and freedom.

"*Sinless* Perfection* is a grating term to many of our dear brethren; even to those who are as desirous and solicitous to be truly holy in heart and life as any perhaps of them who affect to speak in this unscriptural way. Should we not discountenance the use of it, and advise its votaries to exchange it for terms less offensive, but sufficiently expressive of true Christian holiness? By this I mean, (and why may I not tell you what I mean?) all that holiness of heart and life which is *literally, plainly, abundantly* taught us all over the Bible; and without which no man, however justified through faith in *the righteousness of Christ,* can ever expect to see the Lord. This is that holiness, that Christian perfection, that sanctification, which, without affecting *strange, fulsome, offensive, unscriptural* expressions and representations, I, and I dare say every true and sincere-hearted member in our societies, and I hope in all others, ardently desire and strenuously labour to attain. This is attainable: for this therefore let us contend: to this let us diligently exhort and excite all our brethren daily; and this the more as we see the day, the happy, the glorious day approaching.

"I have only to add, that I am determined, through the help of God, so far as I know or see at present, to continue in close connexion with you even unto death; and to be as useful as I am able, or is consistent with my *parochial* and other indispensible obligations; chiefly in this round,† and at times abroad;

* Mr. Wesley himself never used that term. He looked upon it as almost, if not quite, equal to *legal* perfection.

† The circuits were at that time called *rounds.* Haworth, Mr. Grimshaw's parish, was afterward printed in the Minutes "Haworth circuit," and Mr. Grimshaw was appointed the *assistant,* or the preacher who immediately assisted Mr. Wesley.

to strengthen your hands in the great and glorious work of our Lord, which you have evidently so much at heart, elaborately so much in hand, and in which he (blessed for ever be his name!) has so extensively and wonderfully prospered you."

Immediately on the receipt of this letter, before the conference quite broke up, Mr. Wesley took an opportunity of preaching from the words of St. James, 'In many things we offend all.' On this occasion he observed, "1. As long as we live our soul is connected with the body.—2. As long as it is thus connected it cannot think but by the help of bodily organs.—3. As long as these organs are imperfect we are liable to mistakes, both speculative and *practical*.—4. Yea, and a mistake may occasion my loving a good man less than I ought; which is a defective, that is a wrong temper.—5. For all these we need the *atoning blood*, as indeed for *every defect or omission*.—Therefore, 6. All men have need to say daily, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'"—We see here the solid reason why Mr. Wesley always objected to the phrase *sinless perfection*.

THE LIFE

OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

GREAT REVIVAL OF RELIGION—SEPARATION OF MAXFIELD AND OTHERS—MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE AGAINST ANTINOMIANISM—PROTEST BY THE REV. MR. SHIRLEY AND OTHERS—MR. FLETCHER'S WRITINGS.

WHOEVER seriously considers the foregoing pages will readily conclude that the work carried on by Mr. Wesley and his assistants was really of God. The great *concern* for religion, which was evident in many thousands who were before careless or profane; the *impression* made on their minds of the importance of *eternal* things; their being so deeply convinced of the *number* and *heinousness* of their own sins, from which conviction sprung 'fruits meet for repentance;' their being made happy partakers of 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' and walking in all *holiness*, were demonstrable proofs of this. For is there any name given under heaven, whereby men can be *thus* saved, but the name of Christ alone?

But the Lord, at sundry times and in divers places, poured out his Spirit in a remarkable manner. This religious *concern*, these divine *impressions*, and their consequent *fruits*, attended the preaching of God's word in so great a degree upon those occasions, that more were converted in a few months, or even weeks or days at such times, than for several years before. Many parts of these kingdoms have been thus favoured at different seasons; but especially about the year 1760, and for some years after. In London particularly this revival of religion was great and conspicuous; many hundreds were added to the societies, and the word of the Lord was glorified among them.

The city of London had been highly favoured from the commencement of Mr. Wesley's labours. He usually resided there during the winter months. There were now several chapels in it under his direction. In some of these, on every Lord's day, the service of the Church of England was performed, and the Lord's supper administered. Mr. Maxfield, whom we have already mentioned, was ordained by Dr. Barnard, then bishop of Londonderry, who resided for some time at Bath for the benefit of his health. The bishop received him at Mr. Wesley's recommendation, saying, "Sir, I ordain you, to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death." He did assist Mr. Wesley for some years, and was eminently useful.

At the beginning of this great revival of religion Mr. Maxfield was in London. For some time he laboured in concert with Mr. Wesley and the other preachers. But this did not continue. The sower of tares, the enemy of God and man, began now again to pervert the right ways of the Lord. While hundreds rejoiced in God their Saviour with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and yet walked humbly with him, being zealous of 'whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and of good report;' others were not so minded. Instead of the faith which worketh by love, Antinomianism reared its head again. Dreams, visions, and revelations were now honoured more than the written word. Some of the preachers bluntly and sharply opposed the spreading errors; which seemed only to make things worse. But on Mr. Wesley's arrival in town the visionaries stood reproved. For a considerable time, however, as he himself confesses, he knew not how to act. He saw that much good was done; but he also saw that much evil was intermixed. Some who appeared to be very useful among the people, nevertheless encouraged those things which are subversive of true order and contrary to Scripture. He loved Mr. Maxfield much, and hoped all good concerning him; yet he could not but see that he rather encouraged those evils than opposed them. He therefore retired to Canterbury for a few days, from whence he sent him the following letter:

"Without any preface or ceremony, which is needless between you and me, I will simply and plainly tell you what I dislike in your doctrine, spirit, or outward behaviour. When I say

yours I include brother Bell and Owen, and those who are most closely connected with them.

"1. I like your doctrine of *perfection*, or pure love; love excluding sin: your insisting that it is merely by *faith;* that consequently it is *instantaneous*, (though preceded and followed by a gradual work) and that it may be *now*, at this instant.

"But I dislike your supposing a man may be as perfect *as an angel;* that he can be *absolutely* perfect; that he can be *infallible*, or above being *tempted;* or, that the moment he is pure in heart he *cannot fall* from it.

"I dislike the saying, 'This was not known or taught among us till within two or three years.' I grant *you* did not know it. You have over and over denied instantaneous* sanctification to *me*. But I have known and taught it (and so has my brother, as our writings show) above these twenty years.

"I dislike your directly or indirectly depreciating justification; saying, a justified person is not *in Christ*, is not *born of God*, is not *sanctified*, not a *temple of the Holy Ghost;* or that he *cannot please God*, or cannot *grow in grace*.

"I dislike your saying that one saved from sin needs nothing more than *looking to Jesus*, needs not to hear or think of any thing else: *believe, believe*, is enough; that he needs no *self-examination*, no times of *private prayer;* needs not mind *little* or *outward* things; and that he *cannot be taught* by any person who is not in the same state.

"I dislike your affirming that justified persons in general persecute them that are saved from sin; that *they* have persecuted *you* on *this* account; and that for *two years* past *you* have been more persecuted by *the two* brothers than ever you was by the world in all your life.

"2. As to your spirit, I like your confidence in God and your zeal for the salvation of souls.

"But I dislike something which has the appearance of *pride*, of overvaluing yourselves and undervaluing others, particularly the preachers; thinking not only that they are *blind* and that they are not sent of God, but even that they are *dead;* dead to God, and walking in the way to hell; that 'they are going *one*

* By *instantaneous* sanctification Mr. Wesley always meant the *principle* of entire sanctification, which St. John calls '*perfect love;*' that is, love that casts out all *opposite* tempers. May not this be given in a moment?

way, you *another;* that they have *no life* in them!' Your speaking of *yourselves* as though *you* were the *only men* who knew and taught the gospel; and as if not only *all the clergy* but *all the Methodists* besides were in utter darkness.

"I dislike something that has the appearance of *enthusiasm;* overvaluing *feelings* and inward *impressions;* mistaking the mere work of *imagination* for the voice of the Spirit; expecting the end without the means, and undervaluing *reason, knowledge,* and *wisdom* in general.

"I dislike something that has the appearance of *Antinomianism;* not magnifying the law, and making it honourable; not enough valuing *tenderness of conscience,* and exact *watchfulness* in order thereto; using *faith* rather as contradistinguished from *holiness,* than as productive of it.

"But what I most of all dislike is your *littleness of love* to your brethren, to your own society; your want of *union of heart* with them, and *bowels of mercies* toward them; your want of *meekness, gentleness, longsuffering;* your *impatience of contradiction;* your counting every man your enemy that reproves or admonishes you in love; your *bigotry* and *narrowness* of spirit, loving in a manner only those that love *you;* your *censoriousness,* proneness to *think hardly* of all who do not exactly agree with you; in one word, your *divisive* spirit. Indeed, I do not believe that any of you either design or desire a separation. But you do not enough *fear, abhor,* and *detest* it, shuddering at the very thought. And all the preceding tempers tend to it, and gradually prepare you for it. Observe, I tell you before! God grant you may immediately and affectionately take the warning!

"3. As to your outward behaviour, I like the general tenour of your life, devoted to God, and spent in doing good.

"But I dislike your slighting any, the very least rules of the bands or society; and your doing any thing that tends to hinder others from exactly observing them. Therefore,

"I dislike your appointing such meetings as hinder others from attending either the public preaching, or their class or band; or any other meeting which the rules of the society or their office require them to attend.

"I dislike your spending so *much time* in several meetings as many that attend can ill spare from the other duties of their calling, unless they omit either the preaching, or their class or

band. This naturally tends to dissolve our society by cutting the sinews of it.

"As to your more public meetings, I like the praying fervently and largely for all the blessings of God. And I know much good has been done hereby, and hope much more will be done.

"But I dislike several things therein: 1. The singing, or speaking, or praying, of several at once. 2. The praying to the Son of God only, or more than to the Father. 3. The using improper expressions in prayer; sometimes too bold, if not irreverent; sometimes too pompous and magnificent, extolling yourselves rather than God, and telling him what you *are*, not what you *want*. 4. Using poor, flat, bald hymns. 5. The never kneeling at prayer. 6. Your using postures or gestures highly indecent. 7. Your screaming, even so as to make the words unintelligible. 8. Your affirming people *will* be justified or sanctified just now. 9. The affirming they *are* when they are not. 10. The bidding them say, *I believe*. 11. The bitterly condemning any that oppose, calling them *wolves*, &c., and pronouncing them *hypocrites*, or *not justified*.

"Read this calmly and impartially before the Lord in prayer. So shall the evil cease, and the good remain. And you will then be more than ever united to

"Your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY

"*Canterbury, November* 2, 1762."

It does not appear that this letter had any good effect. George Bell, mentioned above as an intimate of Mr. Maxfield, was a sergeant in the life-guards. He was at one time unquestionably a man of piety, of deep communion with God, and of extraordinary zeal for the conversion of souls. But he was not a man of understanding: his imagination was lively, but his judgment weak. While, therefore, he hearkened to the advice of those who had longer experience in the ways of God than himself, as well as more knowledge of the devices of Satan, he was a pattern to all and eminently useful to his brethren. But not continuing to regard either them or his Bible, he fell into enthusiasm, pride, and great uncharitableness. Yet Mr. Wesley it appears was very tender over this poor man: "Being determined," says he, "to hear for myself, I stood where I could hear

and see without being seen. George Bell prayed, in the whole, pretty near an hour. His fervour of spirit I could not but admire. I afterward told him what I did not admire: namely, 1. His screaming every now and then in so strange a manner, that one could scarce tell what he said: 2. His thinking he had the miraculous discernment of spirits: and, 3. His sharply condemning his opposers."

A member of the society soon after observed to Mr. Wesley, "Sir, I employ several men. Now, if one of my servants will not follow my directions is it not right in me to discard him at once? Pray, sir, apply this to Mr. Bell." He answered, "It is right to discard such a *servant*. But what would you do if he were your *son?*"

All this time he was blamed on every hand—by some because he did not reprove those persons; by themselves because, as they said, he was continually reproving them.

"I had a second opportunity," observes Mr. Wesley, "of hearing George Bell. I believe part of what he said was from God, (this was my reflection *at that time*) part from a heated imagination. But as he did not *scream*, and there was nothing dangerously wrong, I do not yet see cause to hinder him."—He heard him once more on that day se'nnight. "I was then convinced," says he, "that he must not continue to pray at the Foundery. The reproach of Christ I am willing to bear; but not the reproach of enthusiasm if I can help it."

"All this time," he proceeds, "I did not want information from all quarters, that Mr. Maxfield was at the bottom of all this; that he was the life of the cause; that he was continually spiriting up all with whom he was intimate against me; that he told them I was not capable of teaching them; and insinuated that none was but himself; and that the inevitable consequence must be a division in the society.

But George Bell became still more wild. And as he took every strong impression made upon his mind for a revelation from God, he at last prophesied in January 1763 that "the end of the world would be on the 28th of February following." Mr. Wesley explicitly declared against this, first in the society, then in the congregation, and afterward in the public papers. When the day arrived he preached at Spitalfields in the evening on 'Prepare to meet thy God:' thus turning to religious

profit, the terror which had seized upon many. After expounding the passage he largely showed the utter absurdity of the supposition that the world would be at an end that night. But notwithstanding all he could say many were afraid to go to bed, and some wandered about in the fields, being persuaded that if the world did not end, at least London would be swallowed up by an earthquake. But *he* went to bed at his usual time, and, as he notes in his Journal, was fast asleep about ten o'clock.

Things now ripened apace for a separation: to prevent which (if possible) he desired all the preachers as they had time, to be present at all meetings when he could not attend himself; particularly at the Friday meeting in the chapel at West-street. At this Mr. Maxfield was highly offended, and wrote to him as follows:—

"I wrote to you to ask if those who before met at brother Guilford's* might not meet in the chapel. Soon after you came to town the preachers were brought into the meeting, though you told me, again and again, they should not come." (*True*, remarks Mr. Wesley, *but since I said this there has been an entire change in the situation of things.*) "Had I known this, I would rather have paid for a room out of my own pocket. I am not speaking of the people that met at the Foundery before; though I let some of them come to that meeting.—If you intend to have the preachers there to watch, and others that *I think very unfit*, and will not give me liberty to give leave to some that *I think fit* to be there, I shall not think it my duty to meet them."—So from this time he kept a separate meeting elsewhere.

Shortly after this Mr. Maxfield refused to preach at the Foundery according to appointment. Mr. Wesley, who was at Westminster, where he intended to preach, hearing this, immediately returned to the Foundery, and preached there himself on the words of Jacob, 'If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved!' Thus was that breach made which could never afterward be healed.

Mr. Maxfield lived about twenty years after this separation, and preached in a meeting-house near Moorfields to a large

* Mr. Guilford afterward became itinerant; and lived, laboured, and died, in the full triumph of faith.

congregation. Several who separated with him continued with him to the last; though far the greater part returned. Mr. Wesley mourned over him as an old and valued friend, and as the first preacher of the gospel who submitted to his direction. But he always considered his behaviour, in the present instance, as both ungrateful and unjust; as well as giving a stab to the cause of true religion in London, from which it did not entirely recover for several years. Poor George Bell lived many years after Mr. Maxfield, but he made no pretension to religion. He was a deplorable instance of the danger which arises even to truly pious persons, from giving place to any *impression* that does not agree with the only true standard, *the word of God*:— I shall have occasion to introduce Mr. Maxfield again to the reader, in a way truly characteristic.

The great revival of religion was not, however, stopped by this unhappy separation, or by the extravagance which led to it. Mr. Wesley soon after visited many parts of England, in which he found the same deep concern for genuine piety, with the same inward, experimental knowledge and love of God, as our Redeemer and Sanctifier, which had been so remarkable in London. Meantime the crowds that flocked to hear the word of God were immense. At Newcastle-upon-Tyne he was obliged to preach in the open air, at five in the morning!

On his return to London he examined the society, and found that one hundred and seventy-five persons had separated from their brethren. But the gracious work of God still continued among those who remained.

"I stood and looked back," says he, "on the late occurrences. The peculiar work of this season has been, what St. Paul calls 'the perfecting of the saints.' Many persons in London, Bristol, York, and in various parts both of England and Ireland, have experienced so deep and universal a change, as it had not before entered into their hearts to conceive. After a deep conviction of inbred sin, of their total fall from God, they have been so filled with faith and love, (and generally in a moment) that sin vanished, and they found, from that time, no pride, anger, evil desire, or unbelief. They could 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.' Now, whether we call this *the destruction* or *suspension* of sin, it is a glorious work of God; such a work as, considering both

the depth and extent of it, we never saw in these kingdoms before.

"It is possible some who spoke in this manner were mistaken; and it is certain some have lost what they then received. A few (very few compared to the whole number) first gave way to enthusiasm, then to pride, next to prejudice and offence, and at last separated from their brethren. But although this laid a huge stumblingblock in the way, still the work of God went on. Nor has it ceased to this day in any of its branches. God still convinces, justifies, sanctifies. We have lost only the dross, the enthusiasm, the prejudice and offence. The pure gold remains, '*faith working by love*,' and we have ground to believe increases daily."

The doctrines of the Bible, of the Reformation, and of the church of England, were now preached in almost every part of the land. Present *salvation by grace through faith*, and *universal obedience* as the fruit thereof, urged on the consciences of men, caused *practical Christianity* again to revive: and to use the words of a pious and elegant writer,* "Leaning on her fair daughters TRUTH and LOVE, she took a solemn walk through the kingdom, and gave a foretaste of heaven to all that entertained her." "She might," says he, "by this time have turned this favourite isle into a land flowing with spiritual milk and honey, if Apollyon, disguised in his angelic robes, had not played, and did not continue to play, his old (Antinomian) game."

We have already seen this mystery of iniquity break out on particular occasions. But the deadly leaven spread far and wide; and many of those whose hearts it had alienated from God, had still '*a name to live*.' Some of them were even accounted pillars in their respective congregations,† who, while the truly pious wept and prayed for them, were 'at ease in Zion,' having only the form of godliness, with a confidence at the same time that their state was good, because 'they knew not what spirit they were of.'

It may not be unacceptable to give a picture of this fatal delusion, drawn by the same masterly hand:

* The late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, Salop.

† Mr. Southey strangely supposes, that this strong description exhibited the true state of the Wesleyan societies! Blessed be God, *we* had then and have still a discipline which prevents such a leaven from *spreading* among *us*. In the parishes, or congregations, it made great havoc.

"At this time we stand particularly in danger of splitting upon the Antinomian rock. Many smatterers in Christian experience talk of *finished salvation* in Christ, or boast of being in a state of justification and sanctification, while they know little of themselves, and less of Christ. Their whole behaviour testifies, that their heart is void of humble love, and full of carnal confidence. They cry, '*Lord, Lord!*' with as much assurance, and as little right, as the foolish virgins. They pass for sweet Christians, dear children of God, and good believers; but their secret reserves evidence them to be only such believers as Simon Magus, Ananias, and Sapphira.

"Some with Diotrephes, 'love to have the pre-eminence, and prate malicious words, and not content therewith, they do not themselves receive the brethren, and forbid them that would.' Some have 'forsaken the right way and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness, they are wells without water, clouds without rain, and trees without fruit:' with Judas they try to load themselves with thick clay, endeavour to 'lay up treasures on earth, and make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Some, with the incestuous Corinthian, are 'led captive by fleshly lusts,' and fall into the greatest enormities. Others, with the language of the awakened publican in their mouths, are fast asleep in their spirits: you hear them speak of the corruptions of their hearts in as unaffected and airy a manner as if they talked of freckles upon their faces: it seems they run down their sinful nature only to apologize for their sinful practices; or to appear great proficients in self-knowledge, and court the praise due to genuine humility.

"Others, quietly 'settled on the lees' of the Laodicean state, by the whole tenour of their life say 'they are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing;' utter strangers to 'hunger and thirst after righteousness,' they never importunately beg, never wrestle hard for the hidden manna. On the contrary, they sing a requiem to their poor dead souls, and say, 'Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up [in Christ] for many years,' yea, for ever and ever; and thus, like Demas, they go on talking of Christ and heaven, but loving their ease and enjoying 'this present world.'

"Yet many of these, like Herod, hear and entertain us gladly;

but like him also, they keep their beloved sin, pleading for it as a right eye, and saving it as a right hand. To this day their bosom corruption is not only alive, but indulged; their treacherous Delilah is hugged; and their spiritual Agag walks delicately, and boasts that 'the bitterness of death is past,' and he shall never be 'hewed in pieces before the Lord;' nay, to dare so much as to talk of his dying before the body, becomes an almost unpardonable crime.

"Forms and fair shows of godliness deceive us: many, whom our Lord might well compare to 'whited sepulchres,' look like angels of light when they are abroad, and prove tormenting fiends at home. We see them weep under sermons, we hear them pray and sing with the tongues of men and angels; they even profess the faith that removes mountains; and yet by and by we discover that they stumble at every molehill; every trifling temptation throws them into peevishness, fretfulness, impatience, ill-humour, discontent, anger, and sometimes into loud passion.

"Relative duties are by many grossly neglected; husbands slight their wives, or wives neglect and plague their husbands; children are spoiled, parents disregarded, and masters disobeyed: yea, so many are the complaints against servants professing godliness, on account of their unfaithfulness, indolence, pert answering again, forgetfulness of their menial condition, or insolent expectations, that some serious persons prefer those who have no knowledge of the truth to those who make a high profession of it.

"Knowledge is certainly increased; 'many run to and fro' after it, but it is seldom experimental; the power of God is frequently talked of but rarely felt, and too often cried down under the despicable name of frames and feelings. Numbers *seek*, by hearing a variety of gospel ministers, reading all the religious books that are published, learning the best tunes to our hymns, disputing on controverted points of doctrine, telling or hearing church news, and listening to or retailing spiritual scandal. But alas! few *strive* in pangs of heartfelt conviction; few 'deny themselves and take up their cross daily;' few 'take the kingdom of heaven by' [the holy] 'violence' of wrestling faith and agonizing prayer; few 'see,' and fewer live in 'the kingdom of God,' which 'is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' In a word, many say, 'Lo! Christ is here; and lo! he is there:'

but few can consistently witness that 'the kingdom of heaven is within them.'

"Many assert that the 'clothing of the king's daughter is of wrought gold:' but few, very few experience that 'she is all glorious within:' and it is well if many are not bold enough to maintain that she is *all full of corruptions*." With more truth than ever we may say,

> Ye different sects, who all declare,
> *Lo! here is Christ, or Christ is there!*
> Your stronger proofs divinely give,
> And show us where *the Christians* LIVE!
> Your claim, alas! ye cannot prove,
> Ye want the genuine mark of LOVE.

"The consequences of this high and yet lifeless profession are as evident as they are deplorable. Selfish views, sinister designs, inveterate prejudice, pitiful bigotry, party spirit, self-sufficiency, contempt of others, envy, jealousy, *making men offenders for a word*—possibly a Scriptural word too, taking advantage of each other's infirmities, magnifying innocent mistakes, putting the worst construction upon each other's words and actions, false accusations, backbiting, malice, revenge, persecution, and a hundred such evils, prevail among religious people to the great astonishment of the children of the world, and the unspeakable grief of the true Israelites that yet remain among us.

"But this is not all. Some of our hearers do not even keep to the great outlines of heathen morality: not satisfied practically to reject Christ's declaration, that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive,' they proceed to that pitch of covetousness and daring injustice as not to pay their just debts; yea, and to cheat and extort whenever they have a fair opportunity. How few of our societies are there where this or some other evil has not broken out, and given such shakes to the ark of the gospel that had not the Lord wonderfully interposed it must long ago have been overset! And you know how to this day 'the name' and truth 'of God' are 'openly blasphemed among the *baptized* heathen,' through the Antinomian lives of many who 'say they are Jews when they are not,' but by their works 'declare they 'are of the synagogue of Satan.' At your peril therefore, my brethren, countenance them not: I know you would not do it

designedly, but you may do it unawares; therefore take heed—more than ever take heed to your doctrine. Let it be Scripturally evangelical; give not the children's bread unto dogs; comfort not people that do not mourn. When you should give emetics do not administer cordials, and by that means strengthen the hands of the slothful and unprofitable servant."

Mr. Wesley had from the beginning borne a faithful testimony against this delusion. In his sermon preached before the university of Oxford, so early as the year 1738, he admitted that the doctrine of *salvation by faith* was often thus abused. "Many," says he, "will now, as in the apostles' days, 'continue in sin that grace may abound.' But their blood is on their own head. The goodness of God ought to lead them to repentance; and so it will those who are sincere of heart." After a trial of more than thirty years he was abundantly confirmed in this sentiment.

Therefore, to raise a bulwark against this overflowing of ungodliness, and to prevent it from spreading among the people under his care, the evil principle which occasioned it was taken into consideration, in the conference of the year 1770. Minutes of this conference were soon afterward published, in which were inserted the following propositions:

"*Take heed to your doctrine.*"

"We said in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.'—Wherein?

"1. With regard to *man's faithfulness*. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression, therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, upon his authority, that if a man 'is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.'

"2. With regard to *working for life*, which our Lord expressly commands us to do. 'Labour' (εργαζεσθε, literally work,) 'for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.' And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'A man is to do nothing *in order to justification*.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' So God himself teaches by the prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents, should 'do works meet for

repentance.' And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?

"Once more review the whole affair:

"1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

"He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

"2. But who among those that never heard of Christ?

"He that, according to the light he has, 'feareth God and worketh righteousness.'

"3. Is this the same with 'he that is *sincere*?'

"Nearly, if not quite.

"4. Is not this *salvation by works*?

"Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.*

"5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years?

"I am afraid *about words*: [namely, in some of the foregoing instances.]

"6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works*. How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works*? And how differs this from, *Secundum merita operum*?† which is no more than, *as our works deserve*. Can you split this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

"7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does, in fact, justify those who, by their own confession, 'neither feared God nor wrought righteousness.' Is this an exception to the general rule?

"It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own thinking so is no proof. For we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect: [i. e., think their case more hopeless than it really is.]

"8. Does not talking, without proper caution, of a *justified* or *sanctified* STATE, tend to mislead men; almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in *one moment*? Whereas,

* That is, '*works meet for repentance*;' and *faith* that pleads the *atonement* and the *promises*, and which is therefore called, *the work of faith*, and also *justifying faith*. Does God justify any, who, being awakened, do not *thus* work?—We see here, that these Minutes were a death-blow to Antinomianism.

† A common phrase among the ancient fathers.

we are every moment *pleasing* or *displeasing* to God, *according to our works;* according to the whole of our present inward tempers, and outward behaviour."

It is hardly possible to give a just idea of the noise which these propositions occasioned among the religious professors of the land. Some, whose carnal confidence was shaken by them, cried out amain "that they were contrary to the gospel, and that Mr. Wesley had in them contradicted all his former declarations." Some even of the truly pious seemed staggered at them; and though they lamented the abuse of gospel truths, could hardly bear so strong an antidote.

From the days of Augustine, who first introduced the question of the "Divine decrees" to the Christian church, even to the present day, this question has been mooted, and has occasioned much discord. The propositions at the conclusion of the Minutes were sufficient to kindle what before was only jealousy and suspicion, into a flame of contention and strife. The Calvinists took the alarm, and the late honourable and reverend Walter Shirley wrote a circular letter to all the serious clergy and others through the land.

In June, 1771, Mr. Fletcher sent a copy of this letter to Mr. Wesley, and at the same time wrote as follows:—"When I left Wales, where I had stood in the gap for peace, I thought my poor endeavours were not altogether in vain. Lady Huntingdon said she would write civilly to you, and desire you to explain yourself about your Minutes. I suppose you have not heard from her; for she wrote me word since that she believed she must not meddle in the affair. Upon receiving yours from Chester I cut off that part of it where you expressed your belief of, what is eminently called by us, *the doctrine of* FREE GRACE, and sent it to the college, desiring it might be sent to Lady Huntingdon. She hath returned it, with a letter wherein she expresses the greatest disapprobation of it: the purport of it is, to charge you with tergiversation, (the old accusation of the Antinomians!) and me with being the dupe of your impositions. She hath wrote in stronger terms to her college.

"Things, I hoped, would have remained here; but how am I surprised and grieved to see zeal borrowing the horn of discord, and sounding an alarm through the religious world against

you! Mr. H—— called upon me last night and showed me a printed circular letter, which I suppose is or will be sent to the serious clergy and laity through the land. I have received none, as I have lost, I suppose, my reputation of being *a real Protestant* by what I wrote on your Minutes in Wales.

"The following is an exact copy of the printed letter:

"'SIR,

"'Whereas Mr. Wesley's conference is to be held at Bristol on Tuesday the 6th of August next, it is proposed by Lady Huntingdon and many other Christian friends, (*real Protestants*) to have a meeting at Bristol, at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the underwritten Minutes; and as the same are thought injurious to the very *fundamental principles of Christianity*, it is further proposed, that they go in a body to the said conference, and insist upon a formal *recantation* of the said Minutes; and, in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their *protest* against them. Your presence, sir, on this occasion is particularly requested: but if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject, to such person as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a dreadful *heresy*, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on, to be there; the cause being of so public a nature.

"'I am, sir,

"'Your obedient servant,

"'WALTER SHIRLEY.'"

Then followed a postscript, containing the objectionable propositions, &c. &c. After stating this Mr. Fletcher proceeds: "I think it my duty, dear sir, to give you the earliest intelligence of this bold onset; and assure you, that, upon the *evangelical* principles mentioned in your last letter to me, I, for one, shall be glad to stand by you and your doctrine to the last, hoping that you will gladly remove stumblingblocks out of the way of the weak, and alter such expressions as may create prejudice in the hearts of those who are inclined to admit it. If

you come this way, sir, I will show you the minutes of what I wrote in Wales, in defence of what is called your *dreadful heresy:* for, as to the writing itself, I have it not; Lady H. would never return it to me. Dear sir, we can never make too much of JESUS CHRIST: some may preach and exalt him *out of contention*, but let us do it *willingly and Scripturally;* and the Lord will stand by us. I beg, I entreat him, to stand by you; particularly at this time to give you the *simplicity of the dove*, and *the wisdom of the serpent;* the condescension of a child, and the firmness of a father.

"I write to Mr. Shirley, to expostulate with him to call in his circular letter. He is the last man who should attack you. His sermons contain propositions much more *heretical* and *anti-Calvinistic* than your Minutes. If my letters have not the desired effect, I shall probably, if you approve of them and will correct them, publish them for your justification. I find Mr. Ireland is to write, to make you *tamely recant*, without measuring swords or breaking a pike with our *real Protestants*. I write to him also."

The honourable and reverend Walter Shirley, the brother of the unhappy earl Ferrars, and chaplain to his sister the pious countess of Huntingdon, was a truly pious man, and affectionately attached for several years to Mr. Wesley, who had been the principal instrument of his conversion. The following letter will clearly show that piety and attachment:

"*Loughrea, Aug.* 21, 1759.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"Your obliging and truly Christian letter was welcome to my soul ten thousand thousand times; and brought along with it a warm satisfaction which could only be exceeded by the pleasure of a personal conversation with you. And I am not without hopes that, when you shall think fit to visit those blessed seminaries of true vital religion in this kingdom, of your own planting, you will take an opportunity of honouring this place, and more particularly my house, with the presence of one whose labours in the gospel of my dear Master are so eminent.

"I thank you greatly for your Alarm: indeed, the devil could not make use of a more subtle, specious insinuation to dissuade

us from pursuing the attack with vigour, than that of Christian prudence. I trust he sees himself baffled, through your timely caution. But, alas! what confidence is there to be put in the weakness of man! It is in the Lord's strength alone that I shall be able to triumph over this, and all other temptations.

"I highly honour and love Mr. Berridge, and Mr. Grimshaw. May God bless them with increasing success, that they may 'see the travail of their souls and be satisfied!' and may he endue me with the same noble courage, that his name may be magnified even in this place!

"What will you say, dear sir, will you not give up every favourable opinion of an unworthy minister as I am, when I inform you, that though there are many under my charge will confess they have been awakened, yet I dare not boast of any confirmed converts (now living) through my preaching and ministry? I bless my God, however, for the dear soul, who departed in peace.

"I am now about to leave them for two or three months, being in a very bad state of bodily health, and advised to go to Bath. Let me entreat your earnest prayers to the God of all grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that I may not be found an unprofitable servant; and that I may return to my dear parishioners, under the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

"That you may finish your course with joy, and in God's good season enter into the full possession of the fruits of your labours, is the sincere prayer of

"Your affectionate brother,

"W. SHIRLEY.

"*To the Rev. J. Wesley.*"

A few years after this, Mr. Shirley adopted the creed of his noble sister, and entering into all her views, became the champion of the cause which appeared to them of so much importance to "evangelical truth."

Tuesday, August 6, the conference began at Bristol. On Thursday morning Mr. Shirley and his friends* were admitted; when a conversation took place for about two hours on the sub-

* The Calvinist ministers, who were summoned by Mr. Shirley, were not willing to enter the lists in the way that he had appointed; and therefore the good man was attended only by a few of the countess's students from her college at Trevecka.

ject which occasioned their visit. Though the party had shown much violence in writing, yet the interview with the conference was managed with much temper and moderation. Mr. Wesley showed great love to his old friend. But the party in the nation was so irritated, that all accommodation became hopeless, and it was thought absolutely necessary to publish Mr. Fletcher's letters. On the 14th Mr. Wesley wrote the following letter to Lady Huntingdon:

"MY DEAR LADY,

"When I received the former letter from your ladyship, I did not know how to answer: and I judged, not only that silence would be the best answer, but also that with which your ladyship would be best pleased. When I received your ladyship's of the second instant, I immediately saw that it required an answer; only I waited till the hurry of the conference was over, that I might do nothing rashly. I know your ladyship would not 'servilely deny the truth.' I think, neither would I; especially that great truth, JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH; which Mr. Law indeed flatly denies, (and yet Mr. Law was a child of God,) but for which I have given up all my worldly hopes, my friends, my reputation; yea, for which I have so often hazarded my life, and by the grace of God will do again. The principles established in the Minutes I apprehend to be no way contrary to this; or to that faith, that consistent plan of doctrine, which was 'once delivered to the saints.' I believe whoever calmly considers Mr. Fletcher's letters will be convinced of this. I fear, therefore, 'zeal against those principles' is no less than zeal against the truth, and against the *honour* of our Lord. The preservation of HIS honour appears so sacred to me, and has done for above these forty years, that I have counted, and do count, all things loss in comparison of it. But till Mr. Fletcher's printed letters are answered I must think every thing spoken against those Minutes is totally destructive of HIS *honour*, and a palpable affront to HIM, both as our Prophet and Priest, but more especially as the King of his people. Those letters, which therefore could not be suppressed without betraying the honour of our Lord, largely prove that the Minutes lay no other foundation than that which is laid in Scripture, and which I have

been laying, and teaching others to lay, for between thirty and forty years. Indeed it would be amazing that God should at this day prosper my labours as much, if not more than ever, by convincing as well as converting sinners, if I was 'establishing another foundation, repugnant to the whole plan of man's salvation under the covenant of grace, as well as the clear meaning of our Established Church, and all other Protestant churches.' This is a charge indeed! But I plead, *Not guilty*. And till it is proved upon me I must subscribe myself,

"My dear lady,

"Your ladyship's affectionate but much injured servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The controversy now fully commenced, and was continued for some time, but very prudently committed almost wholly to Mr. Fletcher; who managed it with astonishing temper and success. Indeed, the temper of this gentleman did not lead him to polemic divinity. He was devout and pious to a degree seldom equalled since the days of the apostles. But being urged into this controversy by the love of truth and reverence for Mr. Wesley, he displayed great knowledge of his subject and a most happy *manner* of treating it. In his hands the ablest of his antagonists were as the lion in the hands of Samson. He demonstrated that those propositions were equally agreeable to Scripture, reason, and the writings of the soundest even of the Calvinistic divines. He largely showed, that as *the day of judgment* differs from *the day of conversion*, so must the conditions of *justification*. That, as in the one we are considered as *mere sinners*, and raised out of guilt and misery by an act of God's mercy through faith in the merits of his Son: so, in the other we are considered as members of the mystical body of Christ; and being enabled by his grace to do works acceptable to God, we are justified in that awful day by the *evidence* though not the *merit* of those works, inward and outward; and yet that we are indebted for *both* to that glorious act of divine love proclaimed by St. Paul, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' And lastly, that the propositions in question secured the one without at all weakening the other.

In all the controversies in which Mr. Wesley had hitherto been concerned he stood alone. In this he had but little to do.

He wrote one or two small tracts; but as the reviewers of that day observed, he soon retired from the field and went quietly on in his labour, happy in being succeeded by so able an auxiliary. Mr. Fletcher abounded in time as well as talents for the work. He equally excelled in temper as in skill. And while he exposed the errors of his mistaken opponents he did honour to their piety. He died in the year 1785, lamented by all the lovers of true religion and useful learning, that were acquainted either with his person or his writings. My admiration of his character would lead me to speak much more concerning him had not his LIFE been published: to that I refer my readers.

From this time Mr. Wesley was but little troubled by the advocates for Absolute Predestination. Mr. Fletcher's Works have been a standing answer to all those who assert it; as well as highly useful to those who have been troubled concerning questions on this subject. They are published in nine volumes octavo, and are well worthy the attention of all serious persons, who will find therein 'the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; the truth as it is in Jesus.'

There is no truth which has not its closely-allied falsehood. This victory of the doctrine of General Redemption, caused many of those who were not established in the truth of the gospel to run into high Arminianism, which, Mr. Fletcher had declared, was nearly allied to Pelagianism. I have myself heard one of those confident spirits, whose 'glorying was not good,' exultingly say, "I know I shall be in heaven, *for*—I am determined to be there."—Mr. Wesley saw the danger, and in his sermons he strongly enforced the humility of the gospel, showing that it was the humility of a *condemned man*, who in his *heart* acknowledges the justice of his sentence.—Some of these superficial professors denied also that faith was the gift of God; and would maintain that it was in every man's power to believe the whole truth of the gospel, even respecting his own acceptance, whenever he pleased! To counteract this pride, and yet preserve the truth, Mr. Wesley frequently preached from the words of our Lord,—'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth,'—and he showed 'how faith was the gift of God,' and yet the act of man. He showed also the distinction with respect to time and calling, and that every man may believe *if* he will, but not *when* he will. '*Salvation is of the Lord;*

he draws, enlightens, convinces men of sin, and helps their unbelief;' —every man may at those times *believe* to the salvation of his soul. The proper Scriptural fruit will accompany such a faith, and prove it to be living and powerful. These discourses were very edifying, and accompanied with uncommon power. He preached to the conference in London two years before his death on Ephesians ii, 8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith,' and stated the old doctrine which he had preached from the same words before the university of Oxford in the year 1738. He warned the preachers against all subtle distinctions, which he pronounced to be "only fit for Jesuits," and totally contrary to the plain gospel of 'God our Saviour.' 'I had never heard him preach with more power or clearness than upon that occasion.

CHAPTER II.

LABOURS OF MR. WESLEY AND HIS ASSISTANTS IN SCOTLAND—CONTROVERSY RESPECTING MR. HERVEY'S LETTERS—RECENT REVIVAL OF THAT CONTROVERSY BY DR. ERSKINE'S BIOGRAPHER.

It has been already stated that in the month of April, 1751, Mr. Wesley first visited Scotland, accompanied by Mr. Christopher Hopper, after having had some correspondence with Mr. Erskine on the subject. Colonel Galatin, then in quarters at Musselborough near Edinburgh, had pressed him to pay him a visit. Mr. Wesley having mentioned this to Mr. Whitefield he replied, "You have no business there; for your principles are so well known that if you spoke like an angel none would hear you. And if they did you would have nothing to do but to *dispute* with one and another from morning to night." He answered, "If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute: for I will studiously avoid controverted points and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity. And if any will begin to dispute they may: but I will not dispute with them."

He went. Hundreds and thousands flocked to hear; and he was enabled to keep his word. He avoided whatever might

engender strife, and insisted upon the grand points, the religion of the heart and salvation by faith, at all times and in all places. And by this means he cut off all occasion of dispute.

At Musselborough especially he was kindly received. He had given them a promise that Mr. Hopper should come back the next week and spend a few days with them. Mr. Hopper did accordingly return at the time appointed, and preached morning and evening to large congregations who heard with the greatest attention.

In April, 1753, Mr. Wesley again visited Scotland. He now entered it on the side of Dumfries. In passing the sands which lie between Bonas and that town the innkeeper who guided him asked with great simplicity, "How much a year he got by preaching thus?" This gave him an opportunity of explaining to his guide that kind of gain to which he seemed an utter stranger. He appeared to be quite amazed, and spoke not one word, good or bad, till he took his leave.

When he arrived at Glasgow that excellent man, Dr. Gillies, received him in a truly Christian spirit; and invited him to preach in his church. Upon this Mr. Wesley remarks, "Surely with God nothing is impossible! Who would have believed five-and-twenty years ago, either that the minister would have desired it or that I should have consented to preach in a Scotch kirk!" He preached also at the prison; and then returned by Edinburgh and Tranent to England. Not long after, Mr. Wardrobe, minister of Bathgate in Scotland, the twin-soul of Dr. Gillies, preached at Mr. Wesley's chapel in Newcastle, to the no small amazement and displeasure of some of his zealous countrymen. Some time after this, Mr. Wesley received from Dr. Gillies the following account of the death of that excellent man:

"Mr. Wardrobe died last night. He was seized on sabbath last, just as he was going to the kirk, with a most violent colic which terminated in a mortification of his bowels. The circumstances of his death are worthy to be recorded. With what pleasure did he receive the message and depart in all the triumph of a conqueror! crying out, 'My warfare is accomplished; I have fought the good fight: my victory is completed! crowns of grace shall adorn this head, (taking off his cap,) and palms be put into these hands. Yet a little while and I shall sing for ever. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' When he was within

a few moments of his last he gave me his hand, and a little after said, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Were I to repeat half of what he spoke, I should write you three hours. It shall suffice, at this time to say, that as he lived the life, so he died the death of a Christian. We weep not for him; we weep for ourselves. I wish we may know how to improve this awful judgment so as to be also ready, not knowing when our Lord cometh."

Mr Adams, minister of Falkirk, wrote thus: "On Friday night about ten I witnessed Mr. Wandrobe of Bathgate's entrance into the joy of his Lord. But, ah! who can help mourning the loss to the church of Christ? His amiable character gave him a distinguished weight and influence; which his Lord had given him to value, only for its subserviency to his honour and glory. He was suddenly taken ill on the last Lord's day, and from the first moment believed it was for death. 'I went to see him on Thursday evening, and heard some of the liveliest expressions of triumphant faith, and of zeal for the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls, mixed with the most amiable humility and modesty. 'Yet a little while,' said he, 'and this mortal shall put on immortality. Mortality shall be swallowed up of life: this vile body fashioned like to his glorious body! O for the victory! I shall get the victory. I know in whom I have believed.' Then with a remarkably audible voice, lifting up his hands, he cried out, 'O for a draught of the well of the water of life, that I may begin the song before I go off to the church triumphant! I go forth in thy name, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only.' I die at the feet of mercy.'—Then stretching out his arms, he put his hand upon his head; and with the most serene, steady, and majestic eye I ever saw, looking upward, he said, 'Crowns of grace, crowns of grace, and palms in their hands! O Lord God of truth, into thy hands I commend my spirit!' After an unexpected revival he said, 'O, I fear his tarrying, lest the prospect become more dark! I sometimes fear he may spare me to live, and to be less faithful than he has helped me to be hitherto.' He said to me, 'You that are ministers, bear a proper testimony against the professors of this age, who have a form of godliness without the power.'—Observing some of his people about the bed, he said, 'May I have some seals among you! O where will the ungodly and sinners of Bath-

gate appear? Labour to be in Christ.'—Then he stretched out his hand to several, and said, 'Farewell, farewell! And now, O Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee!'—Once or twice he said, 'Let me be laid across the bed to expire, where I have sometimes prayed and sometimes meditated with pleasure.' He expressed his grateful sense of the assiduous care which Mr. Wardrobe, of Cult, had taken of him: and on his replying, 'Too much could not be done for so valuable a life,' said, 'O speak not so or you will provoke God! Glory be to God that I have ever had any regard paid me for Christ's sake!' —I am greatly sunk under the event. O help by your prayers to get the proper submission and improvement!"

The Lord was pleased, in Scotland also, to 'choose the foolish things of the world' to carry on his work. Not only such men as Dr. Gillies, Mr. Wardrobe, and Mr. Wesley, but sometimes soldiers in quarters or on recruiting parties, or tradesmen who went thither to get employment, were the instruments of turning many to God who had before sought death in the error of their ways.

The first societies were those of Musselborough and Dunbar; many of whom, at Mr. Wesley's next visit in the year 1757, could rejoice in God their Saviour. During this tour he preached in the open air in every place, and remarks that he was agreeably surprised at the simplicity and teachableness of many who attended his ministry. *Steadiness*, indeed, he looked for in the people of North Britain; and he rejoiced to find also those other pleasing qualities in many.

He visited Scotland again in 1761 and found the labours of the preachers were not in vain. Mr. Hopper met him at Edinburgh, where the preaching was now well attended. From thence he went to Dundee and Aberdeen. At the latter place he was treated with much respect by the principal and other eminent persons of the university. He preached first in the college-close, and then in the hall which was crowded even at five in the morning! In every place some desired to unite with him (according to the rule) to meet together weekly to "provoke each other to love and to good works."

An anecdote, which I doubt not will be pleasing to my readers, is mentioned by Mr. Wesley on this occasion: "May 4.—About noon," said he, "I took a walk to the King's college in Old

Aberdeen. It has three sides of a square handsomely built, not unlike Queen's college in Oxford. Going up to see the hall we found a large company of ladies with several gentlemen. They looked and spoke to one another; after which one of the gentlemen took courage and came to me. He said, 'We came last night to the college-close but could not hear, and should be extremely obliged if you would give us a short discourse here.' —I knew not what God might have to do and so began without delay on 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' I believe the word was not lost. It fell as dew on the tender grass."

The work of God now prospered much. Many were brought to the knowledge and love of God by the preaching of Mr. Roberts and Mr. Hanby at Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen. But Satan was not idle. He made even a good man the cause of unspeakable evil. The late Mr. Hervey, of whose grateful sense of Mr. Wesley's fatherly kindness toward him when he was his pupil at Oxford I have inserted such strong testimonies, was persuaded by a Mr. Cudworth, an Antinomian teacher, to write a pamphlet against him. Cudworth boasted that Mr. Hervey had permitted him "to put out and put in what he pleased" in this performance. In England this tract was but little attended to, the advocates for Particular Redemption being comparatively few. But Dr. Erskine, a man greatly esteemed in Scotland, having republished it in that kingdom with a preface, wherein he bitterly inveighed against what he called the *unsoundness* of Mr. Wesley's principles, caused a flood of calumny to go forth, to the hurt of many who before earnestly sought the kingdom of God.—"O," said one of the preachers then labouring in Scotland, "the precious convictions which these letters have destroyed!* Many that have often declared the great profit

* It is well known that these letters of Mr. Hervey were a posthumous publication; and it was also known to the intimate friends of that pious man that on his deathbed he charged his brother, who was his executor, that they should not be published. The brother, however, was not of Mr. Hervey's mind, and knowing that those letters would have a wide circulation he gave them to the public. Some time after, this brother having fallen into a snare by lending money to the amount of one thousand pounds to an artful man, he was prosecuted for taking more than the legal interest, and the penalty of thrice the sum was recovered. Mr. Blackwell, the banker, an intimate and warm friend of Mr. Wesley, and who for his plain honesty was called "the rough diamond," was Mr. Hervey's banker. Upon that gentleman expressing his surprise that he should be so entrapped, Mr. Blackwell replied, "Mr. Hervey, I

they received under our ministry were by these induced to leave us. This made me mourn in secret places!" Lady Frances Gardiner, the widow of that truly Christian soldier who fell at Preston-Pans fighting for his lawful sovereign, was one of those. A letter which she wrote to Mr. Wesley a short time before Mr. Hervey's were published, while it does honour to the piety of the writer, is a clear proof of the evil which may arise from an immoderate attachment to systems of doctrine; which oftentimes influences the excellent of the earth even to forsake those whom they before esteemed as angels of God. I shall give it at large.

"*Edinburgh, July* 25, 1763.

"REVEREND AND VERY DEAR SIR,

"I persuade myself that you will not be displeased at my taking the liberty to write to you. You have cause to bless God for his having directed you in sending preachers to this place. As to those of them I have heard I have cause to thank God that they came hither. There has been a comfortable reviving of late; some sinners are newly awakened; some formalists have got their eyes opened; some backsliders are recovered; and I believe many saints have been much edified. Mr. Roberts's preaching has been remarkably blessed to many in Edinburgh; and so was Mr. Hanby's the short time he stayed. O that their sermons may be blessed wherever they preach! I verily believe God sent them.

"I have never, I own, been at the preaching-house in a morning yet, as they preach so early: but I ventured to the High School yard the morning you left Edinburgh; and it pleased God, even after I had got home, to follow part of your sermon with a blessing to me; and I think it my duty to mention that God has often of late dealt very bountifully with me. Well may I be astonished at it when I consider my own unworthiness. But I dare venture to say that Christ, and all with Christ, is mine. I beg a share in your prayers; and am, very dear sir,

"Your sister in Christ Jesus,

"FRANCES GARDINER."

will tell you the reason. You know your brother ordered you to destroy those letters against Mr. Wesley. But you thought they would be productive and you published them. The business is now settled and you may count your gains!"—We see there were other persons besides Mr. Wesley who believed in a particular and remunerative providence.

But 'many waters cannot quench love.' Those who 'sought not their own things but the things of Christ,' redoubled their efforts. Very soon after those bitter waters were let out Mr. Thomas Taylor visited Glasgow, and for several weeks together preached in the open air. As the winter came on his difficulties were great: but he continued daily to testify 'repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' At length he saw fruit of his labour. Some turned to God and acknowledged his messenger. A place was then provided for him in which to preach, and the little society was soon increased to seventy persons.

The preachers now penetrated into the highlands; and at his next visit Mr. Wesley preached at Inverness. All in this place seemed to hear him gladly, and a society was afterward formed which continues to this day. On his return to Edinburgh, finding it was the time of celebrating the Lord's supper, he laid aside his last portion of bigotry and partook of that holy ordinance at the West kirk!

But though of a truly catholic spirit he was firm to his own principles. He abhorred that speculative latitudinarianism, that indifference to all opinions, which some men have applauded as true liberality. He knew God had given us a standard of truth; and that nothing was indifferent which was found therein. On this subject he used great plainness of speech; an instance of which he soon after gave to the same people with whom he had communicated.

"The sum," he observes, "of what I spoke was this:

"I love plain dealing. Do not you? I will use it now. Bear with me.

"I hang out no false colours, but show you all I am, all I intend, all I do.

"I am a member of the Church of England; but I love good men of every church.

"My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible bigot. I follow it in all things both great and small.

"Therefore, 1. I always use *a short private prayer* when I attend the public service of God.* Do not *you?* Why do you not? Is not this according to the Bible?

* The generality of the people in Scotland used to come into the kirk and sit down as in any common house.

"2. I *stand* whenever I sing the praises of God in public. Does not the Bible give you plain precedents for this?

"3. I always *kneel* before the Lord my Maker when I pray in public.

"4. I generally in public use *the Lord's Prayer;* because Christ has taught me, *When I pray, to say*—

"I advise every preacher connected with me, whether in England, or Scotland, herein to tread in my steps."

The reader will recollect the observation of Mr. Gambold, that "faith was looked upon as a downright robber" by those who had accumulated a stock of religion which might be truly called *their own.* In Scotland this remark has often been realized. This robber has especially been exclaimed against as troubling the disciples of the Geneva creed; which has been generally so mixed with politics as to betray its earthly origin. Mr. Wesley knew that many in Scotland, who were truly pious, had received that creed from their infancy, had associated it with their gracious helps and comforts, and also reverenced it as the established orthodoxy. He therefore abstained from the controversies so common in that day, and enforced the 'faith' that alone 'overcometh the world, and worketh by love;'—so highly needful for those devout pupils of tradition. This was interpreted as deception, Jesuitism, &c., by those professors of religion who were fond of controversy, and of whom Dr. Erskine now became the champion. It is well for the reputation of the great apostle that those flowers of polemic oratory *must not* be lavished upon *him.* What a fair mark has he given to the adepts in that kind of warfare by his open declaration respecting his own views and conduct, 1 Cor. ix, 20—23! 'The love that thinketh no evil' sees in all this 'the wisdom from above,'* (James iii, 17.) But to others who do not see through that medium it is all art, policy, and deception!

Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart., D. D., in his Life of Dr. Erskine, lately published, has revived this stale controversy concerning Mr. Hervey's letters, and, with the aid of Bishop Warburton's old scurrility, he would make out a fresh case against the Methodist faith. But this also comes a little too late. The *personal* righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, as

* See the liberal and pious sentiments of Mr. Robe and Mr. Erskine, pages 76—79.

imputed to us for our justification, which was the fond opinion of Mr. Hervey, is now exploded by the pious Calvinists, as manifestly precluding the necessity of a Divine atonement, and opening a wide door to Antinomianism.* The very respectable biographer of Dr. Erskine has laboured to establish this faith; but it will not stand against the faith which

> Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
> And opens in each breast a little heaven.

The first Quakers attacked the swelling words of the professors of that day in a concise but forcible manner:—"Friend, thou speakest great things. But is Christ *in thee?* If not, thou art a *reprobate* with all thy talk." Many a Goliah in orthodoxy was felled with this stone taken out of the brook of truth.—A writer in a periodical publication strangely called "The Christian Instructer," has laboured hard to support Sir Henry's cause; but so ignorant is that writer of the common facts needful to be known respecting this controversy that he names Mr. Charles Wesley, who never was in Scotland, and who never wrote on the subject, as the grand troubler of their Israel!—It should also be noted that neither Mr. Wesley's Answer, nor the Rev. Walter Sellon's Reply to these Eleven Letters, is mentioned in this renewed controversy.

Dr. Whitehead observes, "The preachers met with no riotous mobs to oppose their progress in Scotland. Here all ranks and orders of the people, from the highest to the lowest, had long been remarkable for a decent regard to religion and respect for the ministerial character:" a consequence of that *power* of religion which once rested on that nation. "But the preachers soon found that they had prejudices to contend against more difficult to be overcome than the violence of a mob. They found the Scots strongly intrenched within the lines of religious opinions and modes of worship, which almost bade defiance to any mode of attack. Their success was therefore small when compared with what they had experienced in England and Ireland, where their lives had often been in danger from the mob. Mr. Wesley, however, in his stated journeys through Scotland, every where met with the most flattering marks of respect; both from the nobility, (who often invited him to take their houses in his way,)

* See the note in page 38.

from many of the established ministers, and from the magistrates of the cities. In April this year, (1772,) being on his biennial visit to Scotland, he came to Perth, where the magistrates, as a token of their respectful regard for him, presented him with the freedom of the city. The diploma runs thus:

"PERTHI *vigesimò octavo die mensis Aprilis, Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo septuagesimo secundo:*

"*Quo die, magistratuum illustris ordo, et honorandus senatorum cœtus inclytæ civitatis Perthensis, in debiti amoris et affectus Tesseram erga Johannem Wesley, Artium magistrum, nuper collegii Lincolniensis Oxoniæ socium immunitatibus præfatæ civitatis, societatis etiam ac fraternitatis Ædilitiæ privilegiis, de omnibus a cive necessario exigendis ac præstandis donarunt,*" *&c.**

This diploma was struck off from a copperplate upon parchment: the arms of the city and some of the words were illuminated, and flowers painted round the borders, which gave it a splendid appearance And for purity of the Latin it is not perhaps exceeded by any diploma, either from London, or any other city in Europe.

Mr. Southey supposes that the reason why Methodism did not prosper in Scotland as in England was that it was not needed; that the religious education of the Scotch made 'the foolishness of preaching' unnecessary, and consequently *really* foolish. It is not surprising that Mr. Southey should think thus. His opinion of human nature is entirely at variance with the Holy Scriptures, and with the authorized creeds of the Established Churches of both kingdoms. Were Mr. Southey's doctrine true it would be quite sufficient to *direct* men how to walk, and no inward renovation would be needful. In that case the ironical observation of a pious man would be realized.—"If a man be born on the other side of the Tweed he need not be born again." Mr. Wesley, however, painfully found that the self-righteousness natural to man was mightily fostered by *that kind* of religious

* "PERTH, *the twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two:*

"On which day the illustrious order of magistrates and the honourable assembly of senators [aldermen] of the celebrated city of PERTH, in token of their deserved love and affection for JOHN WESLEY, Master of Arts, late Fellow of Lincoln college in Oxford, have bestowed upon him the immunities of the above-mentioned city, and have endowed him with the privileges of the society and brotherhood of a burgess,—with respect to all those things which are necessarily required from and performed by a citizen," &c.

education so common in Scotland. "I am now," says he, speaking of Scotland, "among a people, many of whom hear much, know every thing, and feel nothing." Thus 'that which might have been for their health became an occasion of falling.' There is, however, a great and blessed change in this respect. Dr. Chalmers and other pious ministers seem to have adopted, in a good measure, Mr. Wesley's views; and their success has been so great that multitudes have been roused from their self-righteous delusion; so that the simple and powerful religion of the Bible bids fair to become again the religion of Scotland.

CHAPTER III.

PROPOSAL TO MR. FLETCHER FULLY TO UNITE WITH MR. WESLEY IN THE WORK—REMARKABLE DEATH OF MR. DOWNS—MR. WESLEY'S DANGEROUS ILLNESS IN IRELAND—DISPUTE CONCERNING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION—CURIOUS ANECDOTE CONCERNING MR. WESLEY'S PLATE.

Mr. Wesley now saw the religious societies he had been the happy instrument of forming spread rapidly on every side; and the preachers increasing in an equal proportion. He became, therefore, every day more solicitous to provide for their unity and permanency after his decease, wishing to preserve at the same time the original doctrines and economy of the Methodists. From the beginning he had stood at the head of the connexion, and by the general suffrage had acted as a father in matters relating to the government of the societies. He had often found that all his authority was necessary in order to unanimity, and he wished that authority to be continued.

In January, 1773, being at Shoreham, where, no doubt, he had consulted Mr. Perronet on the subject, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Fletcher, whom, of all men, he thought the most proper to fill his place when the Lord should remove him:

"Dear Sir,

"What an amazing work has God wrought in these kingdoms in less than forty years! And it not only continues but increases throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; nay, it has lately spread into New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia,

Maryland, and Carolina. But the wise men of the world say, 'When Mr. Wesley drops then all this is at an end!' And so it surely will, unless, before God calls him hence, one is found to stand in his place. For Ουκ αγαθον πολυκοιρανιη. Εις κοιρανος εστω.* I see more and more, unless there be one Προεστως,† the work can never be carried on. The body of the preachers are not united: nor will any part of them submit to the rest; so that either there must be ONE to preside over ALL, or the work will indeed come to an end.

"But who is sufficient for these things? Qualified to preside both over the preachers and people? He must be a man of faith and love, and one that has a single eye to the advancement of the kingdom of God. He must have a clear understanding; a knowledge of men and things, particularly of the Methodist doctrine and discipline; a ready utterance; diligence and activity, with a tolerable share of health. There must be added to these, favour with the people, with the Methodists in general. For unless God turn their eyes and their hearts toward him he will be quite incapable of the work. He must likewise have some degree of learning: because there are many adversaries, learned as well as unlearned, whose mouths must be stopped. But this cannot be done unless he be able to meet them on their own ground.

"But has God provided one so qualified? Who is he? THOU ART THE MAN! God has given you a measure of loving faith; and a single eye to his glory. He has given you some knowledge of men and things; particularly of the whole plan of Methodism. You are blessed with some health, activity, and diligence, together with a degree of learning. And to all these he has lately added, by a way none could have foreseen, favour both with the preachers and the whole people.—Come out in the name of God! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Come, while I am alive and capable of labour—

> Dum super est Lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me
> Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo.‡

Come while I am able, God assisting, to build you up in faith, to ripen your gifts, and to introduce you to the people. *Nil*

* It is not good that the supreme power should be lodged in many hands: let there be one chief governor.

† A person who presides over the rest.

‡ While Lachesis has some thread of life to spin, and I walk on my own feet without the help of a staff.—JUVEN., *Sat.* 3.

tanti. What possible employment can you have which is of *so great importance?*

"But you will naturally say, 'I am not equal to the task; I have neither grace nor gifts for such an employment.' You say true; it is certain you have not. And who has? But do you not know HIM who is able to give them? Perhaps not at once, but rather day by day: as each is, so shall your strength be.—'But this implies,' you may say, 'a thousand crosses, such as I feel I am not able to bear.' You are not able to bear them now: and they are not now come. Whenever they do come will he not send them in due number, weight, and measure? And will they not all be for your profit that you may be a partaker of his holiness?

"Without conferring, therefore, with flesh and blood, come and strengthen the hands, comfort the heart, and share the labour of

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

"This warm and sincere invitation," says Dr. Whitehead, "to a situation not only respected but even reverenced by so large a body of people, must have been highly flattering to Mr. Fletcher; especially as it came from a person he most sincerely loved; whose superior abilities, learning, and labours, he admired; and to whose success in the ministry he wished to give every assistance in his power. But he well knew the embarrassments Mr. Wesley met with in the government of the preachers, though he alone, under the providence of God, had given existence to their present character, influence, and usefulness; he was also well acquainted with the mutual jealousies the preachers had of each other, and with their jarring interests; but above all, with the general determination which prevailed among them not to be under the control of any one man after the death of Mr. Wesley. Under these circumstances he saw nothing before him but darkness, storms, and tempests, with the most threatening dangers, especially if he should live to be alone in the office. He therefore determined not to launch his little bark on so tempestuous an ocean."

I have quoted the above passage from Dr. Whitehead, in his own words, as expressive of his views and feelings! But he

wrote on a subject with which he was wholly unacquainted. The *charity* of his surmisings is, however, very manifest. He did not know that Mr. Fletcher had ever answered Mr. Wesley's letter; but I am happy in being able to lay his answer before the reader, who will see in it the very different spirit of that man of God. His faith, indeed, respecting the continuance of the *whole body* of the preachers in their first calling, seems to have been shaken, as Mr. Wesley's also was; but there is no such feeling expressed as that which festered in the mind of Dr. Whitehead. His attachment to that work which he fully believed to be of God is also strikingly evident. He certainly could not be easily persuaded to take the station which Mr. Wesley wished him to take, as his wellknown humility used to give the preachers trouble by his constantly preferring them before himself. But he certainly would have taken a most decided part in the work if his total loss of health, which obliged him to leave his parish and to retire to Switzerland, had not prevented it. Upon his return, with his strength renewed in some degree, he married, and thus became settled in his parish, evidencing to the last his ardent love to the work of God, and to those who were employed in it. At the last conference which he attended, in the year 1784, (the year before he died,) he entreated Mr. Wesley to put Madeley into the Minutes as a Methodist circuit, and that he might be put down as supernumerary there: thus wishing to be still more united to those whom he so much loved.

The following is Mr. Fletcher's answer:

"*Madeley, 6th Feb.* 1773.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"I hope the Lord, who has so wonderfully stood by you hitherto, will preserve you to see many of your sheep, and *me* among the rest, enter into rest. Should Providence call you *first*, I shall do my best, by the Lord's assistance, to help *your brother* to gather the wreck, and keep together those who are not absolutely bent upon throwing away the Methodist doctrine or discipline, as soon as he that now letteth shall be removed out of their way. Every little help will then be necessary; and I hope I shall not be backward to throw in my mite.

"In the mean time, you stand sometimes in need of an assist-

ant to serve tables and occasionally to fill up a gap. Providence visibly appointed me to that office many years ago: and though it no less evidently called me here, yet I have not been without doubt, especially for some years past, whether it would not be expedient that I should resume my place as your deacon; not with any view of presiding over the Methodists after you, (God knows!) but to save you a little in your old age, and be in the way of receiving, and perhaps of doing, more good. I have sometimes considered, how shameful it was that no clergyman should join you, to keep in the church the work which the Lord had enabled you to carry on therein; and, as the little estate I have in my native country is sufficient for my maintenance, I have thought I would one day or other offer you and the Methodists my *free* services.

"While my love of retirement, and my dread of appearing upon a higher stage than that I stand upon here, made me linger, I was providentially called to do something in Lady Huntingdon's plan; but being shut out there, it appears to me I am again called to my first work.

"Nevertheless, I would not leave this place without a *fuller* persuasion that the time is quite come. Not that God uses me much *now* among my parishioners, but because I have not sufficiently cleared my conscience from the blood of all men, especially with regard to ferreting out the poor, and expostulating with the rich, who make it their business to fly from me. In the mean time it shall be my employment to beg the Lord to give me light, to guide me by his counsel, and make me willing to go any where or no where, to be any thing or nothing.

"I have laid my pen aside for some time; nevertheless, I resumed it last week, at your brother's request, to go on with my treatise on *Christian Perfection*. I have made some alterations in the sheets you have seen, and hope to have a few more ready for your correction against the time you come this way.

"How deep is the subject! What need have I of 'the Spirit to search the deep things of God!' Help me by your prayers, till you can help me by word of mouth.

"Reverend and dear sir,

"Your willing, though unprofitable, servant in the gospel,

"J. FLETCHER"

Respecting the preachers, Mr. Fletcher, it is plain, had no feelings in common with Dr. Whitehead. The wish to have Mr. Fletcher at their head, in case of Mr. Wesley's removal, originated with themselves. They pressed Mr. Wesley to apply to him; and, on his reporting Mr. Fletcher's answer, they were so encouraged that they requested that the application should be renewed. Mr. Wesley replied in his usual short way, "He will not come out unless the Lord should baptize him for it."—His habits were very retired, though his exertions *in his parish* were great. In one of his letters to his friend Mr. Ireland he says, "I am like one of your casks of wine: I am good for nothing till I settle."—"If," said he, in another letter, "I had a heart full of grace, a head full of wisdom, and a pocket full of money, I might take Mr. Wesley's place."—From all I know of Mr. Fletcher, I am certain he would have resisted such thoughts as that to which Dr. Whitehead has thus given utterance, and would have considered them as coming from 'the accuser of the brethren.'

Mr. Wesley was now advancing in the seventy-first year of his age, and found his health and strength undiminished: he therefore continued his labours and travels with the same assiduity and punctuality as at the beginning. In June, 1774, when he entered on his seventy-second year, he speaks thus of himself: "This being my birth-day, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering how is this that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now and my nerves firmer than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand *cause* is, the good pleasure of God, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him. The chief *means* are, 1. My constantly rising at four, for about fifty years: 2. My generally preaching at five in the morning, one of the most healthy exercises in the world: 3. My never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year."

About this time died Mr. John Downs, who had been many years a preacher among the Methodists. He was a man of sincere unaffected piety, of great affliction, and also of uncommon genius. Mr. Charles Wesley gives the following account of his death:* "John Downs has lived and died the death of the righteous. For several months past he has been greatly alive to God.

* Taken from his diary in shorthand.

walked closely with him, and visibly growing in grace. Ever since the time that he resolved to preach again, he has preached as often as he really could, and with great success. On Friday morning he rose full of faith, and love, and joy. He declared it was the happiest day of his life, and that he had not been so well in body for years. He expressed his joy in showers of tears—He was led to pray for the people, so as never before. Going out to the chapel at West-street, he said, 'I used to go to preach trembling, and with reluctance, but now I go in triumph.' His text was, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' &c. His words were unusually weighty, and with power, but few. He perceived that he could not finish his discourse, and gave out this verse of the hymn,

Father, I lift my heart to thee,
No other help I know.

His voice failing, he fell on his knees, as meaning to pray; but he could not be heard. The preacher ran and lifted him from his knees, for he could not raise himself. They carried him to bed, where he lay quiet and speechless till eight on Saturday morning, and then fell asleep. O for an end like his! It is the most enviable, the most desirable, I ever heard of. His widow I visited yesterday afternoon. She surprised me, and all who saw her; so supported, so calm, so resigned. A faithful friend received her into her house. She had one sixpence in the world, and no more. But her Maker is her husband: we all agreed it is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our sight."

In 1775 Mr. Wesley visited Ireland in his usual course; and in June, being then in the north on his return from Londonderry, he had the most severe illness he had ever before experienced. It was however in part brought on, and afterward increased, by his own imprudence. I shall give the circumstances in his own words: "Tuesday 13, (of June,) I was not very well in the morning, but supposed it would soon go off. In the afternoon the weather being extremely hot, I lay down on the grass in Mr. Lock's orchard at Cockhill. This I had been accustomed to do for forty years, and never remember to have been hurt by it. Only I never before lay on my face, in which posture I fell asleep. I waked, a little and but a little out of order, and preached with ease to a multitude of people. Afterward I was a good deal worse; however the next day I went on a few miles

to the Grange. The table was placed there in such a manner that all the time I was preaching a strong and sharp wind blew full on the left side of my head; and it was not without a good deal of difficulty that I made an end of my sermon. I now found a deep obstruction in my breast. My pulse was exceeding weak and low. I shivered with cold though the air was sultry hot, only now and then burning for a few minutes. I went early to bed, drank a draught of treacle and water and applied treacle to the soles of my feet. I lay till seven on Thursday the 15th, and felt considerably better. But I found near the same obstruction in my breast: I had a low, weak pulse: I burned and shivered by turns; and if I ventured to cough it jarred my head exceedingly. In going on to Derry-Anvil I wondered what was the matter that I could not attend to what I was reading; no, not for three minutes together, but my thoughts were perpetually shifting. Yet all the time I was preaching in the evening (though I stood in the open air with the wind whistling round my head) my mind was as composed as ever.—Friday 16, in going to Lurgan, I wondered again that I could not fix my attention to what I read: yet while I was preaching in the evening on the Parade, I found my mind perfectly composed, although it rained a great part of the time, which did not well agree with my head.—Saturday 17, I was persuaded to send for Dr. Laws, a sensible and skilful physician. He told me, 'I was in a high fever, and advised me to lie by.' I told him that could not be done, as I had appointed to preach in several places, and must preach as long as I could speak. He then prescribed a cooling draught with a grain or two of camphor, as my nerves were universally agitated. This I took with me to Tandragee; but when I came there I was not able to preach; my understanding being quite confused, and my strength entirely gone. Yet I breathed freely, and had not the least thirst, nor any pain from head to foot.

"I was now at a full stand, whether to aim at Lisburn or to push forward for Dublin? But my friends doubting whether I could bear so long a journey, I went straight to Derry-Aghy, a gentleman's seat on the side of a hill three miles beyond Lisburn. Here nature sunk, and I took to my bed; but I could no more turn myself therein than a new-born child. My memory failed as well as my strength, and well nigh my understanding.

Only those words ran in my mind when I saw Miss Gayer on one side of the bed looking at her mother on the other,

> She sat, like patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief.

"I can give no account of what followed for two or three days, being more dead than alive. Only I remember it was difficult for me to speak, my throat being exceedingly dry. But Joseph Bradford tells me I said on Wednesday, 'It will be determined before this time to-morrow;' that my tongue was much swoln and as black as a coal; that I was convulsed all over; and for some time my heart did not beat perceptibly, neither was any pulse discernible.

"In the night of Thursday, the 22d, Joseph Bradford came to me with a cup, and said, 'Sir, you must take this.' I thought I will, if I can, to please him; for it will do me neither harm nor good. Immediately it set me a vomiting: my heart began to beat and my pulse to play again: and from that hour the extremity of the symptoms abated. The next day I sat up several hours, and walked four or five times across the room. —On Saturday I sat up all day, and walked across the room many times without any weariness.—On Sunday I came down stairs and sat several hours in the parlour.—On Monday I walked before the house.—On Tuesday I took an airing in the chaise: and on Wednesday, trusting in God, to the astonishment of my friends, I set out for Dublin."

About this time Mr. Wesley published his "*Calm Address to the American Colonies*," then at war with England, the mother country. This tract made a great noise and raised him many adversaries. Being frequently asked why he published it? He answered, in Lloyd's Evening Post,

"Not to get money. Had that been my motive I should have swelled it into a shilling pamphlet, and have entered it at Stationer's Hall.—Not to get preferment for myself or my brother's children: not to please any man living, high or low. I know mankind too well. I know they that love you for political service, love you less than their dinner; and they who hate you, hate you worse than the devil.—Least of all did I write with a view to inflame any: just the contrary. I contributed my mite toward putting out the flame which rages all over the land," &c.

Dr. Whitehead observes upon this. "Many of his friends, how-

ever, were of opinion that he would have acted a more wise and better part had he never meddled with political disputes.* Observation had convinced them that ministers of the gospel, by interfering with politics, have seldom done any good, and often much harm; having frequently hindered their own usefulness and made a whip for their own backs."—This also is very likely. But Mr. Wesley suffered for teaching men to 'fear God, and honour the king.' He meddled no more with politics than St. Paul did. But he had harder work than the apostle *on this point;* viz., '*to show to many of God's people their transgressions.*'

In the beginning of the year 1776 Mr. Fletcher was recovering from a severe illness. Mr. Wesley, having a high opinion of the salutary effects of easy journeys through the country in such cases, invited Mr. Fletcher to come out and accompany him through some of the societies in the spring. Part of Mr. Fletcher's answer is as follows: "I received last night the favour of yours, from Bristol. My grand desire is to be just what the Lord would have me to be. I could, if you wanted a travelling assistant, accompany you, as my little strength would admit, in some of your excursions. But your recommending me to the societies as one who might succeed you, should the Lord take you hence before me, is a step to which I could by no means consent. It would make me take my horse and gallop away. Besides, such a step would, at this juncture, I think, be peculiarly improper. We ought to give as little hold to the evil surmisings and rash judgments of our opponents as may be.—What has made me glut our friends with my books, is not any love to such publications, but a desire to make an end of the controversy.† It is probable that my design has miscarried; and that I have disgusted rather than convinced the people.—I agree with you, sir, that now is the time to pray both for ourselves and our king, for the Church of England, and that part of it which is called the Methodists. I cast my mite of supplication into the general treasure. The Lord guide, support, and strengthen you more and more unto the end!"

An order had been made by the house of lords in May, this

* It was very natural for them to think so. They took counsel with flesh and blood, which he never dared to do.

† That is, the American controversy; wherein this man of peace and love wrote more largely and more strongly than Mr. Wesley had done.

year, "That the commissioners of his majesty's excise do write circular letters to all such persons whom they have reason to suspect to have plate, as also to those who have not paid regularly the duty on the same," &c.—In consequence of this order, the accomptant-general for household plate sent Mr. Wesley, in September, a copy of the order, with the following letter:

"REVEREND SIR,

"As the commissioners cannot doubt but you have plate, for which you have hitherto neglected to make an entry, they have directed me to send you the above copy of the lords' order, and to inform you they expect that you forthwith make due entry of all your plate; such entry to bear date from the commencement of the plate-duty, or from such time as you have owned, used, had, or kept any quantity of silver plate, chargeable by the act of parliament; as in default hereof the board will be obliged to signify your refusal to their lordships.

"N. B. An immediate answer is desired."

Mr. Wesley answered as follows:

"SIR,

"I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread.

"I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

CHAPTER IV.

LABOURS AND OPPOSITION IN THE ISLE OF MAN—SECESSION OF AN EMINENT PREACHER—PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION—MR. WESLEY'S LETTER ON THAT OCCASION—HIS LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON, AND TO SIR HARRY TRELAWNEY—THOUGHTS ON "DR. PARSON'S REMAINS OF JAPHET"—CURIOUS QUESTIONS PUT TO MR. WESLEY—HIS LETTER RESPECTING THE SABBATH DAY, ADDRESSED TO ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS—CURIOUS FRAGMENT—MR. WESLEY'S VISITS TO HOLLAND.

In the year 1776 the Methodist preachers visited the Isle of Man.* The year before, a local preacher from Liverpool, Mr. John Crook, had paid them a visit, and spent some time with them. He repeated his visit this year, and societies were already formed in seven different places, and they reckoned 157 members in the island. It happened here, as in most places of Great Britain and Ireland, that the first preaching of the Methodists produced no commotions or riots among the common people. I am, indeed, fully convinced, that the lower orders of the people would never become riotous on account of religion, were they not excited to it, under false pretences, by persons who have some influence over them, and who endeavour to keep behind the scene. The preachers, however, did not long enjoy peace.

* This island is mentioned by several ancient authors. Cæsar calls it *Mona;* but the *Mona* of Tacitus can only be applied to Anglesey. Pliny calls it *Monabia;* and in Ptolemy, we find *Monaida*, that is, the farther or more remote *Mön.* Orosius styles it *Menavia;* and tells us, that it was extremely fertile. Bede, who distinguishes clearly two Menavian islands, names this *the Northern Menavia,* bestowing the epithet of *Southern* upon Anglesey. Alured of Beverly also speaks of it as one of the Menavian islands. The Britons, in their own language, called it *Manaw,* more properly *Main au,* that is "a little island," which seems to be Latinized in the word *Menavia.* All which proves that this small isle was early inhabited, and as well known to the rest of the world as either Britain or Ireland.

The Isle of Man was for a long time an independent state, governed by its own princes. At length, however, they became feudatories to the kings of England, resorted to their court, were kindly received, and had pensions bestowed upon them. Upon the demise of Magnus, the last king of this isle, without heirs male, Alexander III, king of Scots, who had conquered the other isles, seized likewise upon this; which, as a part of that kingdom, came into the hands of Edward I, who directed William

Two or three ill-minded persons, of some influence in the island, formed a plan of opposition, which, in such cases, is but too often successful. These persons, to give greater weight to their opposition, so far prejudiced the mind of the bishop against these new comers, that he wrote a pastoral letter, directed to all the rectors, vicars, chaplains, and curates, within the isle and diocess of Man.

In this letter his lordship states the ground of his opposition thus: "Whereas we have been informed, that several unordained, unauthorized, and unqualified persons from other countries, have, for some time past, presumed to preach and teach publicly, and hold and maintain conventicles; and have caused several weak persons to combine themselves together in a new society, and have private meetings, assemblies, and congregations, contrary to the doctrines, government, rites, and ceremonies of the Established Church and the civil and ecclesiastical laws of this isle. We do, therefore, for the prevention of *schism* and the re-establishment of that *uniformity* in religious worship which so long hath subsisted among us, hereby desire and require each and every of you, to be vigilant and use your utmost endeavours to dissuade your respective flocks from following, or being led and misguided by such incompetent teachers," &c. &c.— After expatiating a little on this part of his charge, he tells his clergy that if they could not prevail with the people by persuasion, they must get a knowledge of the names of such persons as

Huntercumbe, warden of that isle for him, to restore it to John Baliol, who had done homage to him for the kingdom of Scotland.

But it seems there was still remaining a lady named Austrica, who claimed this sovereignty as nearest of kin to the deceased Magnus. This claimant being able to obtain nothing from John Baliol, applied herself to king Edward as the superior lord. He, upon this application, by his writ, which is yet extant, commanded both parties, in order to determine their right, to appear in the king's bench. The suit, it seems, was successful; for we know, that this lady, by a deed of gift, conveyed her claim to Sir Simon de Montacute; and after many disputes, invasions by the Scots, and other accidents, the title was examined in parliament, in the seventh of Edward III, and solemnly adjudged to William de Montacute; to whom, by letters patent dated the same year, that monarch released all claim whatsoever. It descended afterward to the duke of Athol, from whom the English government purchased it in the year 1765, the duke retaining his landed property. The manorial rights and emoluments, the patronage of the bishopric, and other ecclesiastical benefices, are unalienably vested in the crown, and the island subjected to the regulations of the British excise and customs.—The inhabitants of the isle are of the church of England, and the bishop is styled, bishop of Sodor and Man. By an act of parliament, the thirty-third of Henry VIII, this bishopric is declared to be in the province of York.—*Encyclop. Brit.*

attended at "these *unlawful* meetings," as he calls them, and especially of such as enjoyed any office or privilege by episcopal license, and present them to his reverend vicars general, or to some of them. He then requires every one of his clergy to repel any Methodist preacher from the sacrament if he should offer himself at the table to receive it. He further directs, that this pastoral letter should be read, *plena Ecclesia, in full church*, the next Sunday after the receipt thereof.

The storm now became violent, and Methodism was threatened with a total shipwreck on the island. The preachers and people, however, weathered it out; and in the end of May, 1777, Mr. Wesley paid them a visit, and was received in a very friendly manner by a few persons of respectability and influence. At Peele-Town Mr. Corbet said he would gladly have asked him to preach in his church, but the bishop had forbidden. On this occasion Mr. Wesley observes, "Is any clergyman obliged either in law or conscience to obey such a prohibition? By no means. The *will* even of the king does not bind any English subject, unless it be seconded by an express law. How much less the will of a bishop? *But did not you take an oath to obey him?* No: nor any clergyman in the three kingdoms. This is a mere *vulgar error*. Shame that it should prevail almost universally!"

Before Mr. Wesley's next visit the bishop was dead. His successor was a man of a very different spirit; and has proved a blessing to the island. When Mr. Wesley arrived all was peace. Before his departure he made the following remarks, with which I shall conclude this account:

"Having now visited the Island round, east, south, north, and west, I was thoroughly convinced that we have no such circuit as this, either in England, Scotland, or Ireland. It is shut up from the world: and having little trade, is visited by scarce any strangers. Here are no disputes; no opposition, either from the governor, (a mild, humane man,) from the bishop (a good man) or from the bulk of the clergy. One or two of them did oppose for a time; but they seem now to understand us better. So that the scandal of the cross seems to have for the present ceased. The natives are a plain, artless, simple people; few of them are rich or genteel; the far greater part moderately poor. And most of the strangers that settle among them are men that have seen affliction." The word of the

Lord has therefore free course, and the fruits of righteousness and peace have increased to this day.

About the time of the conference this year a travelling preacher, the late Mr. J. H., who had been well received by the people, and who had enjoyed a large share of Mr. Wesley's confidence for several years, withdrew from the connexion and went among the Quakers. There had been a misunderstanding between them for some time before he took this step; and soon afterward he wrote his determination to Mr. Wesley. Mr. Charles Wesley was in the habit of corresponding with this preacher, and happening to see the letter, requested his brother to let *him* answer it. The request was granted; and as the answer is written with candour, contains some good observations on young converts, and points out one striking trait in Mr. John Wesley's character, I shall insert it. The date is October, 1777.*

"I thank you," says he, "for your affectionate letter.† It confirms and increases my love toward you. Your phrase and dress make no difference to us.—Let us abide in the love of Jesus, and we must continue to love one another.—Out of true impartial love to you both, I long for peace between you and my brother. But alas! you do not love each other so well as I do: mutual confidence is lost, and then what union can there be? I submit to the permissive will of Providence.

"If I know my own heart, I have nothing there but tender disinterested love for him and for you: and it is, and must be, a serious grief to me that you are not cordially affected to each other. But we might part friends, who can never part.—I wished to see you; I should not have said one word against your religion; but I should have taken the liberty of giving you a friendly caution or two, lest Satan get an advantage over you, or us.

"You know, when a man leaves one religious party or society, it is a theme both to him and them. Those of his old friends who loved him merely as a member of their society, will cease to love him on that account: those who have little or no grace, will partly treat him as a deserter, and express their anger or illwill by speaking against him. This stabbing

* This letter is taken from Mr. Charles Wesley's papers in shorthand.

† I suppose one that Mr. Charles Wesley had received from him.

a man in the back, as soon as he turns it upon us, I abhor and protest against; and discourage to the utmost of my power. One who forsakes his former friends, will be tempted to speak evil of them, and mention their faults, real or supposed, to justify himself for leaving them, or to recommend himself to his new friends. I always stood in doubt of such converts; whether from the Calvinists, Moravians, Dissenters, or any other. Besides a young convert is always most zealous in making *proselytes;* which awakens suspicion in the deserted party, and arms them against depredations.

"My brother showed me your last: I desired him to let me answer it. Hope of a free conversation with you hindered me from writing. You know I have talked with you concerning him without reserve: I could not have used such confidence toward another. Still I am as incapable of mistrusting you as you are of trusting him. In many things I have more fellowship with you than I have with him: my love for both is the same.

"But, 'You expect he will keep his own secrets!' Let me whisper it into your ear; he never could do it since he was born. It is a gift which God has not given him. But I shall speak to him, and put a stop to what you justly complain of, and let all be buried in oblivion—I wish you may never have an uneasy thought on our account. Speak not therefore of my brother; think no evil of him; forget him, if you can, entirely, till you meet above.

"You are now entering on a new scene of things. You have no doubt of God's calling you among the Friends. I judge nothing before the time: time will show. I heartily pray God you may do and receive much more good among them than you did among us.* If God give you discernment and favour, and you are the approved instrument of reviving his work, and *their* first love, I shall rejoice and be thankful that you ever left *us*. But if (which God forbid!) you should bury your talent, do no good, and only change *one form* for *another;* alas! alas! my

* This good man was possessed of eminent ministerial gifts, but he fell into the mystic delusion from which Mr. Wesley had escaped. He then became high-minded, and censorious; and Mr. Charles Wesley, in his hours of depression, used too much to listen to him. The Quakers were jealous of him, and kept him silent a long time, to his great mortification: but it was the very thing he needed. It was *good medicine to heal his sickness.*

brother, you will prove yourself mistaken, and lose many jewels which might have been added to your crown.*

"I should think worse of our society than you do if they felt no sorrow at parting with you—Some whom I know will seldom think of you without a sorrowful tear. The days of my mourning are just ended. My hope of you is steady, that if you hold out a little longer I shall find you again among the blessed in that day."

Hitherto the society in London had occupied the old Foundery, near Upper Moorfields, as a place of worship; but were now making preparations to quit it. They had obtained the promise of a lease from the city of a piece of ground in the City-road; and, every thing being prepared, the day was fixed for laying the foundation of a chapel. "The rain," says Mr. Wesley, "befriended us much, by keeping away thousands who purposed to be there. But there were still such multitudes, that it was with great difficulty I got through them to lay the first stone. Upon this was a plate of brass, covered with another stone, on which was engraved, 'THIS WAS LAID BY JOHN WESLEY, ON APRIL 1, 1777.' Probably this will be seen no more by any human eye; but will remain there till the earth and the works thereof are burnt up."

By the end of October, 1778, the chapel was built and ready to be opened. "November 1," says Mr. Wesley, "was the day appointed for opening the new chapel in the City-road. It is perfectly neat, but not fine; and contains far more than the Foundery: I believe, together with the morning chapel, as many as the Tabernacle. Many were afraid that the multitudes, crowding from all parts, would have occasioned much disturbance: but they were happily disappointed; there was none at all. All was quietness, decency, and order. I preached on part of Solomon's *prayer at the dedication of the Temple;* and, both in the morning and afternoon, God was eminently present in the midst of the congregation."

In February, 1779, Mr. John Wesley observes, "Finding many serious persons were much discouraged by *prophets of evil* con-

* This was precisely the issue. In one of Mr. H.'s last conversations with me a few years ago, he said, "I would not have thy people to think of changing: they may be disappointed." He was then in a sweet and humble spirit, very different from that in which he left us; and I rejoiced in hope of meeting him where those *who overcome shall be pillars in the temple of God to go out no more.*

fidently foretelling very heavy calamities which were coming upon our nation; I endeavoured to lift up their hands by opening and applying those comfortable words, (Psalm xliii, 5, 6,) 'Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? Why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God; for I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of my countenance, and my God."—The next day was the national fast. And he observes, "So solemn a one I never saw before. From one end of the city to the other there was scarce any one seen in the streets. All places of public worship were crowded in an uncommon degree; and an unusual awe sat on most faces. I preached on the words of God to Abraham interceding for Sodom, 'I will not destroy it' (the city) 'for ten's sake.'"

Dr. Whitehead here also well observes, "When we find a man constantly travelling through all parts of the nation; holding intercourse with immense multitudes of people, by means of the pulpit and private correspondence; and exerting all his influence on every occasion of public distress or alarm to soften and quiet the minds of the people, we must call him a national blessing. And such was the constant practice of Mr. Wesley for more than half a century!"

In the beginning of this year, 1780, a great clamour was raised against the bill passed in favour of the Roman Catholics. A "Protestant Association" was formed to obtain a repeal of it; and in the end much mischief was done;—not without suspicion, however, that the outrages which followed were greatly promoted and increased by Papists, and by others in disguise. The one party wished to disgrace "the Association;" the other, the ministry. But before these things happened, a pamphlet was written in defence of the object the Association had in view; and an answer to it soon appeared. These pamphlets were put into Mr. Wesley's hands; and, having read them, he wrote a letter on the subject, dated January 21, which he sent to the printer of the *Public Advertiser*. In this letter, after premising that persecution had nothing to do with the matter, and that he wished no man to be persecuted for his religious principles; he lays down this general proposition, "That no Roman Catholic does or can give security to a Protestant government for his allegiance and peaceable behaviour." He rested the proof of this proposition on the following arguments:

"1. It is a Roman Catholic maxim, established not by private men but by a public council, that *No faith is to be kept with heretics.* This has been openly avowed by the council of Constance;* but it never was openly disclaimed. Whether private persons avow or disavow it, it is a fixed maxim of the Church of Rome.

"2. One branch of *the spiritual power* of the pope is, and has been for ages, the power of *granting pardons* for all sins past, present, and to come! But those who acknowledge him to have this spiritual power can give no security for their allegiance,—*Ergo.*

"The power of *dispensing* with any promise, oath, or vow, is another branch of *the spiritual power* of the pope. And all who acknowledge his spiritual power must acknowledge this: but whoever acknowledges this *dispensing power* of the pope cannot give security for his allegiance to any government—Nay, not only *the pope*, but even *a priest*, has *power to pardon sins!* This is an essential doctrine of the Church of Rome. But they who acknowledge this cannot possibly give any security for their allegiance to any government.

"Setting then religion aside, it is plain that, upon principles of reason, no government ought to tolerate men† who cannot give any security to that government for their allegiance and peaceable behaviour. But this no Romanist can do, not only while he holds, that 'No faith is to be kept with heretics,' but so long as he acknowledges either *priestly absolution*, or *the spiritual power* of the pope."

A Mr. O'Leary, a Capuchin friar, wrote a reply to these propositions, and endeavoured to explain away the obnoxious decree of the council of Constance. The propositions, however, remained unanswered, and the decree of the council could not be got over. The Rev. Mr. Skelton, an eminently pious and learned minister of the Church of Ireland, celebrated for several useful publications, especially a remarkable one, published during the rebellion in Scotland, entitled "THE HOPES OF THE CHEVALIER," returned Mr. Wesley his thanks for his

* By the decree of this council John Husse and Jerome of Prague were burned alive, notwithstanding the *safeconduct*, to and from the council, granted to each of them by the emperor.

† He meant, that they ought not to give them political power. No man abhorred persecution on account of religion more than Mr. Wesley. Soon after this he published his admirable tract entitled POPERY CALMLY CONSIDERED.

letters in answer to Mr. O'Leary. He used to speak much of them; and the gentleman who delivered his thanks to Mr. Wesley, (with whom I then was in Dublin,) observed, "Sir, Mr. Skelton declared to me that your propositions were a wall of adamant; and that Mr. O'Leary's arguments were as boiled peas shot against it."

This mighty fabric of popery is evidently nodding to its fall. It has continued so long, partly by the support of political power, but chiefly because so many truly devoted souls have been found within its pale. It may truly be called the *Christianity of the* WORLD. But the Bible has gone forth as it never did before, and the FAITH 'that overcometh the world' keeps pace with it. In a little time none will be found to submit to the antichristian yoke but those who *reject the word of God.*' Those who receive the truth will come forth, saying to the would-be UNIVERSAL BISHOP as the Greek Church said long ago, in departing, "Thy greatness we know, thy covetousness we cannot satisfy, thy intolerable insolence we can no longer endure:—LIVE TO THYSELF!" It will then 'suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

In the course of this year, 1780, some persons in America, attached to the doctrines and to the ritual of the Church of England, wrote to Mr. Wesley, requesting that he would get a young man ordained for them by one of the bishops in this country. They did not apply to "*the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge in Foreign Parts,*" because they did not want pecuniary assistance from that fund. Mr. Wesley wrote to Dr. Lowth, bishop of London, begging the favour that he would ordain a pious young man for them. The bishop refused; and August 10, Mr. Wesley sent him the following letter:

"MY LORD,

"Some time since I received your lordship's favour, for which I return your lordship my sincere thanks. Those persons did not apply to the society, because they had nothing to ask of them. They wanted no salary for their minister; they were themselves able and willing to maintain him. They therefore applied, by me, to your lordship, as members of the Church of England, and desirous so to continue, begging the favour of

your lordship, after your lordship had examined him, to ordain a pious man who might officiate as their minister.

"But your lordship observes, 'There are three ministers in that country already?' True, my lord: but what are three, to watch over all the souls in that extensive country. Will your lordship permit me to speak freely? I dare not do otherwise. I am on the verge of the grave, and know not the hour when I shall drop into it. Suppose there were threescore of those missionaries in the country, could I in conscience recommend these souls to their care? Do they take any care of their own souls? If they do, (I speak it with concern!) I fear they are almost the only missionaries in America that do. My lord, I do not speak rashly: I have been in America; and so have several with whom I have lately conversed. And both I and they know what manner of men the far greater part of these are. They are men who have neither the power of religion nor the form; men that lay no claim to piety, nor even decency.

"Give me leave, my lord, to speak more freely still: perhaps it is the last time I shall trouble your lordship. I know your lordship's abilities and extensive learning: I believe, what is far more, that your lordship fears God. I have heard that your lordship is unfashionably diligent in examining the candidates for holy orders: yea, that your lordship is generally at the pains of examining them *yourself*. 'Examining them!' in what respects? Why, whether they understand a little Latin and Greek, and can answer a few trite questions in the science of divinity! Alas, how little does this avail? Does your lordship examine whether they serve Christ or Belial? whether they love God or the world? whether they ever had any serious thoughts about heaven or hell? whether they have any real desire to save their own souls, or the souls of others? If not, what have they to do with holy orders, and what will become of the souls committed to their care?

"My lord, I do by no means despise learning; I know the value of it too well. But what is this, particularly in a Christian minister, compared to piety? What is it in a man that has no religion? 'As a jewel in a swine's snout.'

"Some time since I recommended to your lordship a plain man, whom I had known above twenty years, as a person of deep, genuine piety, and of unblamable conversation. But he

neither understood Greek nor Latin; and he affirmed, in so many words, that 'He believed it was his duty to preach, whether he was ordained or no.' I believe so too. What became of him since, I know not. But I suppose he received Presbyterian ordination; and I cannot blame him if he did. He might think any ordination better than none.

"I do not know that Mr. Hoskins had any favour to ask of the society. He asked the favour of your lordship to ordain him, that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your lordship did not see good to ordain *him*: but your lordship did see good to ordain, and send into America, other persons, who knew something of Greek and Latin; but who knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales.

"In this respect also I mourn for poor America: for the sheep scattered up and down therein. Part of them have no shepherds at all, particularly in the northern colonies; and the case of the rest is little better, for *their own shepherds pity them not.* They cannot, for they have no pity on themselves. They take no thought or care about their own souls.

"Wishing your lordship every blessing from the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,

"I remain, my lord,
"Your lordship's dutiful son and servant,
"JOHN WESLEY."

In the midst of the multiplicity of affairs in which Mr. Wesley was concerned, he constantly paid attention to the spiritual welfare, not only of the members of his own society, but of those persons with whom he occasionally corresponded. The following is an instance of this kind attention and brotherly care. Sir Harry Trelawney,* celebrated for his zeal and eccentricities, had been a Calvinist, and during that period had been shy of Mr. Wesley's acquaintance. At length being convinced that the narrow and limited views of John Calvin, concerning the atonement of Christ, were not agreeable to the general tenour of the invitations, promises, and threatenings of the New Testament, he quitted the Calvinists. On this occasion Mr. Wesley wrote to him,

* He was the hero of a witty book, entitled the *Spiritual Quixote*, or the History of Geoffry Wildgoose, Esq. It was written by a minister of the Church of England, for the want of better work.

congratulating him on his escape; but at the same time warning him of the danger of running into the opposite extreme. This is so natural to the human mind that it is difficult to be avoided; and by yielding to this impulse in some doctrines of importance, it is to be feared that many have made 'shipwreck of the faith.' Mr. Wesley kindly cautioned his friend against the danger which lay before him. "For a long time," says he, "I have had a desire to see you, but could not find an opportunity; and, indeed, I had reason to believe my company would not be agreeable; as you were intimate with those who think they do God service by painting me in the most frightful colours. It gives me much satisfaction to find that you have escaped out of the hands of those warm men. It is not at all surprising that they should speak a little unkindly of you too, in their turn. It gave me no small satisfaction to learn from your own lips the falsehood of their allegation. I believed it false before, but could not affirm it so positively as I can now.

"Indeed, it would not have been without precedent, if, from one extreme, you had run into another. This was the case with that great man, Dr. Taylor, of Norwich. For some years he was an earnest Calvinist; but afterward, judging he could not get far enough from that melancholy system, he ran, not only into Arianism, but into the very dregs of Socinianism. I have reason, indeed, to believe, he was convinced of his mistake, some years before he died. But to acknowledge this publicly was too hard a task for one who had lived above eighty years.

"You have need to be thankful on another account likewise; that is, that your prejudices against the Church of England are removing. Having had an opportunity of seeing several of the churches abroad, and having deeply considered the several sorts of Dissenters, at home I am fully convinced that our own church, with all her blemishes, is nearer the Scriptural plan than any other in Europe.

"I sincerely wish you may retain your former zeal for God; only, that it may be a 'zeal according to knowledge.' But there certainly will be a danger of your sinking into a careless, lukewarm state, without any zeal or spirit at all. As you were surfeited with an irrational, unscriptural religion, you may easily slide into no religion at all; or, into a dead form,* that will

* This fear was unhappily realized.

never make you happy either in this world or in that which is to come. Wishing every Scriptural blessing, both to Lady Trelawney* and you,

"I am, dear sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"J. WESLEY."

Notwithstanding Mr. Wesley's itinerancy, his daily labour of preaching, visiting the societies, and extensive correspondence; yet he still found time to read many books. And, what is rather singular, he often met with books that are very scarce, which many men of literature, with good libraries, have never seen. He read, not only books of divinity, of natural history, and moral philosophy, which came more immediately within the province of his profession, but books which treated of the most remote antiquity. Here investigation is difficult; and the highest degree of evidence to be attained, a bare probability. Yet even these books Mr. Wesley read with uncommon diligence and care, often collecting the substance of them into a small compass, and directing it to the one point which he had ever at heart. The following is an instance of this kind:

September 1, 1781, he says, "I made an end of reading that curious book, Dr. Parson's *Remains of Japhet*. The very ingenious author has struck much light into some of the darkest parts of ancient history. And although I cannot subscribe to every proposition which he advances, yet I apprehend, he has sufficiently proved the main of his hypothesis; namely,—1. That after the flood, Shem and his descendants peopled the greatest part of Asia.—2. That Ham and his children peopled Africa.—3. That Europe was peopled by the two sons of Japhet, Gomer, and Magog; the southern and southwestern, by Gomer and his children; and the north and northwestern, by the children of Magog.—4. That the former were called Gomerians, Cimmerians, and Cimbrians; and afterward, Celtæ, Galatæ, and Gauls; the latter were called by the general name of Scythians, Scuti, and Scots.—5. That the Gomerians spread swiftly through the north of Europe, as far as the Cimbrian Chersonesus, including Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and divers

* Lady Trelawney was the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Brown, an intimate friend of Mr. Wesley, of whom I shall have to speak hereafter.

other countries, and then into Ireland, where they multiplied very early into a considerable nation.—6. That some ages after, another part of them, who had first settled in Spain, sailed to Ireland under Milea, or Melesius, and, conquering the first inhabitants, took possession of the land.—7. That about the same time the Gomerians came to Ireland the Magogians, or Scythians, came to Britian: so early, that both spake the same language, and well understood each other.—8. That the Irish spoken by the Gomerians, and the Welsh, spoken by the Magogians, are one and the same language, expressed by the same seventeen letters, which were long after brought by a Gomerian prince into Greece.—9. That all the languages of Europe, Greek and Latin* in particular, are derived from this.—10. That the antediluvian language spoken by all till after the flood, and then continued in the family of Shem, was Hebrew; and from this (the Hebrew) tongue, many of the eastern languages are derived. The foregoing particulars this fine writer has made highly probable. And these may be admitted, though we do not agree to his vehement panegyric on the Irish language; much less receive all the stories told by the Irish poets, or chroniclers, as genuine authentic history."

Dr. Whitehead observes, "Candour will readily acknowledge, and envy itself must confess, that a man in the seventyninth year of his age, who, in the midst of daily avocations which he deemed of the highest importance to himself and others, could go through a work of this kind with so much attention, and collect the substance of it into a few general heads, must have possessed great strength of mind, and an uncommon degree of the spirit of inquiry."

In February, 1782, a person unknown proposed a few questions to Mr. Wesley in writing, and begged the favour of unequivocal answers. The questions and answers were as follow:

"Is it your wish, that the people called Methodists should be, or become, a body entirely separate from the Church?

Answer. No. [And it is not so now.]

"If not, *where*, that is, *how often* and *where*,—I mean upon what description of teachers of the Establishment are they to attend?"

* How amazingly, in that case, must these languages have been improved! Of the Latin in particular, I do not wonder that Cowper should say, "What a people they must have been who spoke such a language!"

Answer. I advise them to go to church. [In what churches could half of them now find room?]

"More particularly, if the fall, the corruption, and natural impotence of man; his free and full redemption in Christ Jesus, through faith working by love, should be taught and inculcated, and offered to the attention of *all*, at the church of the parish where they reside, are they *then*, in your opinion, bound in conscience *to hear*, or may they, at their own option, *forbear?*"

Answer. I do not think they are bound in conscience to attend any *particular* church.

"Or if they are at liberty to absent themselves, are they at liberty, that is, have they *a Christian privilege* to censure this doctrine in the gross, to condemn such teachers, and boldly to pronounce them 'blind leaders of the blind?'"

Answer. No; by no means.

"Whenever this happens, is it through prejudice, or rational piety? Is it through bigotry, or a catholic spirit? Is it consistent with Christian charity? Is it compatible with a state of justification? Or is it even allowable in the high habit of evangelical perfection?"

Answer. I think it is a sin.—[So this curious and, I am afraid, artful inquirer, took nothing for his motion!]

About the latter end of this year, 1782, a report prevailed, and gained credit, that the administration had an intention to bring in a bill into the house for embodying the militia, and for exercising them on Sunday. On this occasion Mr. Wesley wrote the following letter to a nobleman then high in office:

"My Lord,

"If I wrong your lordship I am sorry for it; but I really believe your lordship fears God: and I hope your lordship has no unfavourable opinion of the Christian revelation. This encourages me to trouble your lordship with a few lines, which otherwise I should not take upon me to do.

"Above thirty years ago a motion was made in parliament for raising and embodying the militia, and for exercising them, to save time, on Sunday. When the motion was like to pass, an old gentleman stood up and said, 'Mr. Speaker, I have one objection to this: I believe an old book, called *the Bible*.' The members looked at one another and the motion was dropped.

"Must not all others who believe the Bible have the very same objection? And from what I have seen I cannot but think these are still three-fourths of the nation. Now, setting religion out of the question, is it expedient to give such a shock to so many millions of people at once? And certainly it would shock them extremely: it would wound them in a very tender part. For would not they, would not all England, would not all Europe, consider this as a virtual repeal of the Bible? And would not all serious persons say, 'We have little religion in the land now; but by this step we shall have less still. For wherever this pretty show is to be seen the people will flock together; and will lounge away so much time before and after it, that the churches will be emptier than they are already!

"My lord, I am concerned for this on a double account.—*First*. Because I have personal obligations to your lordship, and would fain, even for this reason, recommend your lordship to the love and esteem of all over whom I have any influence.—*Secondly*. Because I now reverence your lordship for your office sake, and believe it to be my bounden duty to do all that is in my little power to advance your lordship's influence and reputation.

"Will your lordship permit me to add a word in my old-fashioned way? I pray Him that has all power in heaven and earth to prosper all your endeavours for the public good, and am,

"My lord,

"Your lordship's willing servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

In the beginning of this year, 1782, Mr. Wesley received from one of those good kind of people, whom he used to call *Croakers*, (and who appears to have been displeased with him for having written concerning the war with America,) a dolorous letter, full of his own apprehensions. A fragment of it only has been preserved. "And first," says the writer, "I would advise you to speak comfortably to the people, who are irritated to a high degree against you. The die is not yet cast: you are not yet in as bad a situation, as England is with regard to America. A few comfortable words might yet make them your own for ever. Let not your sun go down under a cloud. Stain not with blood every action of your whole life. Leave the event to Providence.

You cannot prevent a separation of your preachers [the common notion at that time] after you are gone to rest; why should you see it in your lifetime? A door is open for you at Bristol, and a comfortable door too: why should you leave the word of God to serve tables? at the instigation of those who would be glad to see your head laid in the dust, if they might sit in your chair! One would think you might, with almost half an eye, see what some of them are aiming at. May the God of peace open your eyes, and direct you to act in such a manner as will disappoint our grand adversary of his unlawful prey.

"I am, reverend sir,

"Your well-wisher and humble servant,

"J. M."

Thus the croakers of his day used to pester the great Lord Burleigh, the minister of Queen Elizabeth, with their *information* and *advice;* but they always found that he knew more of the matter than they did. The prophecies of the *separation of the preachers,* and of *the work dwindling into little sects and parties,* have all come to an end; like those which were spoken, foretelling the ruin of England and America, by that violent collision. But 'the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the LORD! and THE GOVERNMENT is upon his shoulders,' to that very end. How often, therefore, may it be said,

Far, far above thy thought,
His counsel shall appear,
When fully He the work hath wrought,
Which caused thy needless fear!

England and America have both prospered since that lamentable contention beyond all calculation; and bid fair, when 'patience shall have its perfect work,' and a firm union (so much desired!) shall be accomplished, not only to awe the antichristian powers, and secure peace to the world, but to carry the gospel to the remotest regions of the earth.

Dr. Whitehead observes, "In June, 1783, Mr. Wesley went over to Holland, and spent his birth-day, completing the eightieth year of his age in that country. He seemed pleased with his visit, though the motives for making it are not very obvious. It is not probable that the design originated with himself; and any *conjectures* concerning the reasons why others put him upon it, might be false, and appear illnatured or invidious."—Very likely

they might. But, as the doctor has well observed in another place, "Mr. Wesley had no secrets."—He has detailed the facts in his Journal; and I am enabled to state with whom the design originated.

Mr. William Ferguson, a member and local preacher in the London society, traded to Holland for some years, and generally spent his summers there. He was a truly pious man, and could not be hid from those who had 'like precious faith.' He soon found in Holland some who were Methodists in every thing except the name. His company was desired, not only by those of his own rank, but by many of the principal inhabitants and persons in authority. He spoke much of Mr. Wesley, and of the people under his care in England, and distributed his sermons among his new friends. Of these they expressed high approbation, and also their wishes to see the venerable founder of Methodism among them. Mr. Ferguson pressed Mr. Wesley to visit these pious people. His own philanthropy, always alive to that which is good, aided the request.

Accordingly, on the 12th of June, 1783, he sailed from Harwich, and landed the next day at Helvoetsluys. He was received with uncommon respect by all the people, and favoured with the company of many eminent ministers of the church of Holland, as well as of the English ministers in the commercial towns. With the former he conversed in Latin. In the Episcopal church at Rotterdam he preached twice to large congregations; the first time, on 'God created man in his own image,' and the people "seemed, all but their attention, dead;" the second time, on 'God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.'

At the Hague he was invited to tea by Madam de Vassenaar, a lady of the first rank in that city. She received him with that easy openness and affability which is almost peculiar to Christians and persons of quality: soon after, came ten or twelve ladies more, who seemed to be of her own rank, (though dressed quite plain,) and two most agreeable gentlemen, one of whom was a colonel in the prince's guards. After tea he expounded the three first verses of the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians; and Captain M—— interpreted sentence by sentence. Mr. Wesley then prayed, and Colonel V—— prayed after him.

On the following day he dined at Mrs. L——'s. Her mother,

upward of seventy, seemed to be continually rejoicing in God her Saviour. The daughter breathed the same spirit; and her grandchildren, three little girls and a boy, seemed to be all love. A gentleman coming in after dinner, Mr. Wesley found a particular desire to pray for him. In a little while the stranger melted into tears, as indeed did most of the company. The next day Madam de Vassenaar invited Mr. Wesley to a meeting at a neighbouring lady's house; where he expounded Gal. vi, 14; and captain M—— interpreted as before.

In his way from Haerlem to Amsterdam he met with several fellow passengers who were truly serious. Some of them sung hymns in a very pleasing manner: and his and their hearts were so knit together in Christian love that their parting at Amsterdam was very affecting.

In that city he visited a lady of large fortune, who appeared to be entirely devoted to God. "There is such a childlike simplicity," observes Mr. Wesley concerning Amsterdam, "in all that love God in this city, as does honour to the religion they profess."

After performing service in the English church he visited a Mr. B——, who had, not long before, found peace with God. This gentleman was full of faith and love, and could hardly mention the goodness of God without tears. His lady seemed to be exactly of the same spirit. From thence he went to another house where a large company was assembled; and all seemed open to receive instruction, and desirous to be altogether Christians.

On the 28th of June he made the following observation: "I have this day lived fourscore years; and, by the mercy of my God, my eyes are not waxed dim: and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless. Rather may I

> My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live."

On the next day he preached, in the English church at Utrecht, a very faithful, searching sermon; and afterward dined with a merchant, who seemed to be deeply acquainted with religion. In the evening, at the desire of several persons, he repeated in a private house the substance of his morning's sermon, to a large company, Mr. Toydemea, the professor of law in the university, interpreting it sentence by sentence. The congregation then sung a Dutch hymn, and Mr. Wesley and his

companions an English one. Afterward Mr. Regulet, a venerable old man, spent some time in prayer for the establishment of peace between the two nations.

On Tuesday, July 1, he sailed from Helvoetsluys, but, through contrary winds, did not arrive at Harwich till the Friday following. He observes on the whole, that the persons with whom he conversed in Holland were of the same spirit with his friends in England; and that he was as much at home in Utrecht and Amsterdam as in Bristol and London.

In the year 1786 he again visited Holland. Nothing new arose during this tour. Many of the ministers waited on him. Some of the churches were opened. He preached and expounded in many private houses; and received many marks of courtesy from several pious persons of rank and fortune, particularly from Mr. Loten, one of the burgomasters of Utrecht, who, both at this time and on his former visit, seemed studious to show him proof of his regard and attention. Miss Loten, his daughter, a most amiable and pious young lady, continued to correspond with Mr. Wesley till his death, in the English language, which she well understood: I have read many of her letters to Mr. Wesley.

In visiting Holland he had no design to form societies. He made these visits partly for relaxation, and partly to indulge and enlarge his catholic spirit, by forming an acquaintance with the truly pious in foreign nations. He often, with great satisfaction, reflected on the sameness of true religion in every country. He saw that the genuine spirit of piety, in every time and place, tends to promote union in heart and brotherly kindness. The same simplicity of manners and dress he also observed even in those of the highest rank that professed godliness. The meetings for Christian fellowship he found to be very similar to those he had himself established. But as few of the ministers of the church of Holland seemed to encourage or rightly understand the excellency of this great help to piety; and as the intolerant spirit of the national establishment at that time prevented these pious persons from having ministers after their own heart, they were, on these accounts, deprived of the full advantages which they might have enjoyed in more favourable circumstances. But the Lord will, in his own good time, remove from that lovely people this want of conformity to his pure gospel.

THE LIFE

OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEED OF DECLARATION—MR. WESLEY'S ORDINATIONS—SHORT ACCOUNT OF DR. COKE.

THE year 1784 is remarkable in the annals of Methodism, 1. For the solidity given to its affairs by the deed of declaration, enrolled in chancery, whereby the numerous chapels of the connexion were secured to the people for the purposes for which they had been built: and, 2. For the advancement of its spiritual privileges, by giving a full Christian ministry to the societies in America, just then become independent of the mother country.

The founder and chief instrument, in the hand of God, of this great work, had often, before this time, been importuned to take those steps, which to the generality of our people seemed necessary for those great purposes, and thus to quiet the minds of many who dreaded the dissolution of this social compact, whenever they contemplated the death of the venerable founder. But he was not hasty to listen to those fears. He never forgot that the work was the Lord's, and that he need not, and ought not, to be anxious about the circumstances of it, but to wait the Lord's time.

How exceedingly men have mistaken the character of Mr. Wesley! Because he held, what the Scriptures teach concerning religious affections, it has been confidently said, and published too, that he was wholly led by impulses and inward feelings. In the whole compass of thought there could not be a greater mistake respecting him. What his father used to observe of him when he was a boy was true to the last moment

of his life: "As for Jack, he will have a reason for every thing he is to do. I suppose he would not do any thing, (*non etiam crepitare*) unless he had a reason for it." Mr. Wesley observed to me one day, "Count Zinzendorff was mistaken in his notion of the way in which the Lord leads his servants; viz., by a divine impression. His account suits only one kind of men, and it is safe to *them* only while they continue entirely devoted. The Lord, on the contrary, has three ways of guiding them, suited to the different construction of men's minds:—1. To some he gives a divine impression, that what is proposed in any particular case, not expressly defined in Holy Scripture, is of him.—2. To others, who are more sober in their mental constitution, he gives an apt and convincing Scripture.—3. To others he gives a clear *reason* for that particular line of duty which they should then adopt. He has chiefly led me in this last way, though I have found at times all the three concur." I had myself observed this in him. When I have spoken of the probable utility of any proposed measure, he would say, in his usual kind way, "Come, Henry, *hoc age!* 'Mind the point in hand.' Give me *a reason*."—The reason why he should act, as already intimated, was now very apparent; and he hesitated no longer.

With respect to the chapels, which were then greatly multiplied, the call was imperative. They were safe during his life, as the various deeds specified, that he, by name, should appoint the preachers from time to time. The generality of those deeds specified also, that, after his death, the CONFERENCE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS should appoint the preachers in like manner. Some of those deeds had no reference to any posthumous appointment, and so would have been completely in the power of the trustees, at Mr. Wesley's decease. Several even of those trustees, where the chapels were settled according to the Methodist plan, did not scruple to say, "That the CONFERENCE was not an assembly that the law would recognise, and that, therefore, they would, after Mr. Wesley's death, appoint whom they should think proper." One of these said to me, "They might appoint a Popish priest, if they should think it proper."

That there could be but little hope that the work should continue to be a work of God where such a power should be assumed, was very clear to all who were the subjects of that

work. Upon Mr. Wesley's mind it lay with great weight. That men, not a few of whom had departed from the society, (and some had been expelled from it,) should merely, by virtue of their *legal* authority over the premises, appoint preachers to feed and guide the flock, exhibited a distressing prospect. Even where the trustees continued members of the society, and attached to its interests, what could be expected in a matter of such vital concern from men so much engaged in worldly business? This has often been proved in religious communities. It was the chief cause of the decline of religion among the latter Puritans: their lay-elders assumed, after some time, the whole authority. From this proceeded that worldly spirit and political zeal which so greatly dishonoured that work in its last days; and which had previously overthrown both church and state. We see also, in our day, in the sufferings of the excellent Scott, as detailed in his Memoirs lately published, what both ministers and people have to expect from such a system of lay-government.

The evil showed itself in prominent overt acts previous to this period. Mr. Wesley having striven to prevail on some trustees in Yorkshire to settle their chapels, so that the people might continue to hear the same truths, and be under the same discipline as heretofore, was assailed with calumny and with the most determined opposition, as though he intended to make the chapels his own! Another set of trustees, in the same county, absolutely refused to settle a lately erected chapel; and, in the issue, engaged Mr. Wesley's book-steward in London, who had been an itinerant preacher, to come to them as their minister. This man, however, was 'wise in his generation;' and insisted upon having an income of sixty pounds per annum, with the chapel-house to live in, settled upon him during his life, before he would relinquish his place under Mr. Wesley. What will not party spirit do! I was a witness, when after Mr. Wesley's death it was found that the preachers continued united and faithful in their calling, how deeply those men repented of their conduct in this instance. In vain they represented to the man of their unhappy choice how lamentably their congregations had declined, and how hardly they could sustain the expenses they had incurred. The answer was short: they might employ other preachers if they should think it proper; but the dwelling-house and the stated income belonged to him!

We need not wonder that Dr. Whitehead should speak with such deep concern, and indulge such a spirit of calumny concerning this important measure of settling the chapels. The doctor, and many others who had departed from the work, had, through that wise measure, but little prospect of succeeding, like his friend the book-steward, to occupy chapels built for the people by Mr. Wesley's influence and the labour of the preachers. The favour of those trustees who might be disposed to forget their sacred obligations, and incur such an awful responsibility, held out but little hope to such men, now that a legal definition was given to the phrase—THE CONFERENCE: and, in fact, every appeal made to equity has fully succeeded on this very ground.

In that day of uncertainty and surmise there were not wanting some, even among the itinerant preachers, who entertained fears respecting a settlement of this kind. They had but little hope that the work would continue after Mr. Wesley's death as it had during his life; and they thought it probable that the largest societies and, of course, the principal chapels would become independent. In such a case, the favour of the chief men, and especially of the trustees, would insure considerable advantages to those itinerants who might wish to become settled ministers. Of all this Mr. Wesley was fully aware, and he determined to counteract such wisdom. He found it, however, very difficult to do so, without breaking with them, which love forbade; or assuming, in a questionable case, an authority contrary to that of a father in Christ. One of those preachers, and of considerable eminence, attacked the deed of settlement, and declared, that Mr. Wesley might as justly place all the dwelling-houses, barns, workshops, &c., in which he had preached for so many years, under the authority of the conference, as he had done the chapels, and that he thus assumed an authority that the Lord had not given him. This seemed far too strong to be generally received, and it was quickly answered. A preacher, in reply, observed, "that, certainly, there was as much justice in the one case as the other, provided those dwellinghouses, barns, workshops, &c., had been built in consequence of the preaching, and by the subscriptions of the connexion; and in order that those erections might continue to be used for the purposes for which they were thus built. This closed the debate

for that time; but the preacher first mentioned, soon after he had got to his circuit, rallied again, and wrote Mr. Wesley a long and earnest expostulation on the same subject, which I read to him in course. To this Mr. Wesley thus shortly replied:

"My dear Brother, I do not love to dispute; and, least of all, to dispute with *you*, who will dispute through a stone wall. It seems a little thing with you, who shall appoint the preachers; with me it is, under God, every thing, both for the prosperity and the continuance of the work."—He concluded with some fatherly advice, not to be so very sure of his own opinion, or so wise in his own conceit.

The first charge which Dr. Whitehead brings against this important transaction is, that "neither the design of the deed, nor the words of the several clauses, are to be imputed to Mr. Wesley."—I answer, the doctor here asserts that of which he had no knowledge. He had, several years before, departed from the work, and from all fellowship with the preachers or people. When he again joined the Methodist society in London, he heard the surmisings and complaints of some who had taken offence at this measure, and this he detailed at a convenient period. Some of the itinerant preachers brought the same charge at the first conference after the deed was enrolled; and declared, that it was the work of Dr. Coke, who had joined Mr. Wesley a few years before. Mr. Wesley only replied to this in the words of Virgil, *Non vult, non potuit!* "He had neither the will nor the power."

The truth is: the conference had requested Mr. Wesley to get such an instrument drawn up, as would define or explain what was meant by that expression, used in the various deeds of the chapels so settled; viz., "*The Conference of the People called Methodists*," upon the meaning of which terms the authority so appointing must rest, so long as there should be an itinerant ministry. The elder Mr. Hampson mentioned in the preface to this work, was particularly earnest with Mr. Wesley to have such an instrument executed without delay. He immediately set about it; and having given directions to his solicitor, who took the opinion of counsel upon the most proper and effectual way of doing it, he committed it chiefly to the care of Dr. Coke, as his own avocations would not admit of a constant personal attendance. He however wrote, with his own hand, a list of a

hundred names, which he ordered to be inserted, declaring his full determination that no more should be appointed; and as there never had been so great a number at any conference, and generally from twenty to thirty less, the number so fixed would not, it was thought, have excited either surprise or displeasure.

Some of those preachers, however, whose names were omitted, were deeply offended, as I have stated in the preface to the first volume. But I can state with the fullest certainty, that what Dr. Whitehead has asserted, respecting Mr. Wesley having repented of this transaction, is totally unfounded. On the contrary, he reviewed it always with high satisfaction; and praised God, who had brought him through a business, which he had long contemplated with earnest desire, and yet with many fears. The issue, even to this day, proves the wisdom of the measure; and that it was in the order of HIM, without whom "nothing is strong, nothing is holy." Many chapels have been restored to the societies, to whom they in justice belonged, by the upright decisions of our courts of equity, so that now no fears are entertained of any chapels settled according to this deed.

Dr. Whitehead's second objection is a poor cavil. He strives, in the strongest language, to fix the charge of *falsehood* on those who drew up this DEED, and on Mr. Wesley, who signed and sanctioned it, because of the term, "THE CONFERENCE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS." I cannot but fear, that this charge might be retorted against the doctor with truth; for he well knew, when he wrote thus, that the term was inserted in this explanatory and authoritative instrument, because it was not only the term used in common speech for many years, but also because it was used in every record, and in all the deeds of chapels which were settled in this way. It was therefore absolutely necessary, that, in such an explanatory deed, the same term should be used as in the deeds of the particular chapels to which it referred. Had not the doctor, therefore, an intention to deceive, when he cried out, "It is well known that *the people called Methodists* never held a conference since *Methodism* existed?" Certainly not; nor will they ever come together till they 'all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' But there was no deception in thus using the term. Every member of the connexion knew that it meant the assembled

preachers of the people called Methodists. The doctor brings in the *people*, as he does the *church*, when it suits his purpose. His observations on this point are only suited to the theories of our wildest demagogues. This absolutely necessary work was done *for the people*, who could, in no other way, retain their property, and have an itinerant ministry. They now enjoy these blessings, and are thankful to God and man.

The deed of declaration is dated February 28, 1784. It is entitled, "The Rev. John Wesley's Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the People called Methodists:" and, in the attested copy, is said to be "Enrolled in his majesty's high court of chancery."—I shall endeavour to state the substance of the preamble to this deed as concisely as possible to retain the sense complete:—it says that, "Whereas divers buildings, commonly called chapels, with a messuage and dwelling-house, situate in various parts of Great Britain, have been given and conveyed, from time to time, by the said JOHN WESLEY, to certain persons and their heirs, in each of the said gifts and conveyances named—UPON TRUST; that the trustees in the several deeds respectively named, and the survivers of them, and the trustees for the time being, to be elected as in the said deed is appointed, should permit the said John Wesley, and such other persons as *he* should, for that purpose, nominate and appoint, at all times during his life, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises, therein to preach and expound God's holy word: and, *upon farther trust*, that the said respective trustees, &c., should permit CHARLES WESLEY, brother of the said John Wesley, and such other persons as the said Charles Wesley should, for that purpose, nominate and appoint, in like manner, during his life. And after the decease of the surviver of them, the said John and Charles Wesley, THEN UPON FARTHER TRUST, that the said respective trustees, &c., should permit such persons, and for such time and times as should be appointed at *the yearly conference of the people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, or Leeds*, and no others, to have and enjoy the said premises for the purposes aforesaid: AND WHEREAS divers persons have, in like manner, given or conveyed many chapels, &c., situate in various parts of Great Britain, and also in Ireland, to certain trustees, in each of the said gifts and conveyances respectively named, upon the like trusts, and for the same uses and

purposes as aforesaid, (except only, that in some of the said gifts and conveyances, no life estate or other interest is thereby given and reserved to the said Charles Wesley) : AND WHEREAS, for rendering effectual the trusts created by the said several gifts or conveyances, and that no doubt or litigation may arise with respect to the interpretation and true meaning thereof, it has been thought expedient by the said John Wesley, on behalf of himself, as donor of the several chapels, &c., as of the donors of the said other chapels, &c., to explain the words, *Yearly conference of the people called Methodists*, contained in all the said TRUST DEEDS, and to declare *what persons* are members of the said conference, and how the *succession* and *identity* thereof is to be continued : *now, therefore, these presents witness*, that, for accomplishing the aforesaid purposes, the said John Wesley doth hereby declare, that *the conference of the people called Methodists*, in London, Bristol, or Leeds, ever since there hath been any yearly conference of the people called Methodists, hath always heretofore consisted of the preachers, commonly called Methodist preachers, in connexion with, and under the care of, the said John Wesley, whom he hath thought expedient, year after year, to summon to meet him, to advise with them for the promotion of the gospel of Christ, to appoint the said persons so summoned, and the other preachers also in connexion with, and under the care of, the said John Wesley, not summoned to the yearly conference, to the use and enjoyment of the said chapels ; the names of all which persons so summoned and appointed, with the chapels to which they were so appointed, together with the duration of such appointments, with all other matters transacted at the said yearly conference, have, year by year, been printed and published under the title of '*Minutes of Conference*.'"

The deed then states the declaration and establishment of the conference in the following words : "*And these presents further witness*, and the said John Wesley doth hereby avouch and farther declare, that the several persons herein after named, to wit."—After mentioning by name one hundred of the preachers, it farther states that these—" Being preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care of, and in connexion with, the said John Wesley, *have been, now are*, and do, on the day of the date hereof, constitute *the members of the said conference*, according to the true intent and meaning of the said several

gifts and conveyances, wherein the words, 'conference of the people called Methodists' are mentioned and contained. And that the said several persons before named, and their successors for ever, to be chosen as herein after mentioned, are, and shall for ever be construed, taken, and be, *the conference of the people called Methodists*. Nevertheless, upon the terms and subject to the regulations herein after prescribed; that is to say,

"*First*. That the members of the said conference and their successors for the time being for ever, shall assemble once in every year, at London, Bristol, or Leeds, (except as after mentioned,) for the purposes aforesaid; and the time and place of holding every subsequent conference shall be appointed at the preceding one, save that the next conference after the date hereof shall be holden at Leeds, in Yorkshire, the last Tuesday in July next.

"*Second*. The act of the majority in number of the conference assembled as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, and be the act of the whole conference to all intents, purposes, and constructions whatsoever.

"*Third*. That, after the conference shall be assembled as aforesaid, they shall first proceed to fill up all the vacancies occasioned by death or absence, as after mentioned.

"*Fourth*. No act of the conference, assembled as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, or be the act of the conference, until forty of the members thereof are assembled, unless reduced under that number by death since the prior conference, or by absence as after mentioned; nor until all the vacancies occasioned by death or absence shall be filled up by the election of new members of the conference, so as to make up the number one hundred, unless there be not a sufficient number of persons, objects of such election: and, during the assembly of the conference, there shall always be forty members present at the doing of any act, save as aforesaid, or otherwise such act shall be void.

"*Fifth*. The duration of the yearly assembly of the conference shall not be less than five days, nor more than three weeks, and be concluded by the appointment of the conference, if under twenty-one days; or otherwise, the conclusion thereof shall follow, of course, at the end of the said twenty-one days; the whole of all which said time of the assembly of the conference

shall be had, taken, considered, and be *the yearly conference of the people called Methodists;* and all acts of the conference, during such yearly assembly thereof, shall be the acts of the conference, and none others.

"*Sixth.* Immediately after all the vacancies, occasioned by death or absence, are filled up by the election of new members as aforesaid, the conference shall choose a president and secretary of their assembly out of themselves, who shall continue such until the election of another president or secretary in the next or other subsequent conference; and the said president shall have the privilege and power of two members in all acts of the conference during his presidency, and such other powers, privileges, and authorities, as the conference shall, from time to time, see fit to intrust into his hands.

"*Seventh.* Any member of the conference absenting himself from the yearly assembly thereof for two years successively, without the consent or dispensation of the conference, and being not present on the first day of the third yearly assembly thereof, at the time and place appointed for the holding of the same, shall cease to be a member of the conference, from and after the said first day of the said third yearly assembly thereof, to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. But the conference shall and may dispense with, or consent to the absence of, any member from any of the said yearly assemblies, for any cause which the conference may see fit or necessary; and such member, whose absence shall be so dispensed with, or consented to by the conference, shall not, by such absence, cease to be a member thereof.

"*Eighth.* The conference shall and may expel and put out from being a member thereof, or from being in connexion therewith, or from being upon trial, any person, member of the conference, admitted into connexion, or upon trial, for any cause which to the conference may seem fit or necessary; and every member of the conference, so expelled and put out, shall cease to be a member thereof, to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. And the conference immediately after the expulsion of any member thereof as aforesaid, shall elect another person to be a member of the conference in the stead of such member so expelled.

"*Ninth.* The conference shall and may admit into connexion

with them, or upon trial, any person or persons whom they shall approve, to be preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care and direction of the conference; the name of every such person or persons so admitted into connexion or upon trial, as aforesaid, with the time and degrees of the admission, being entered in the journals or minutes of the conference.

"*Tenth.* No person shall be elected a member of the conference, who hath not been admitted in connexion with the conference as a preacher and expounder of God's holy word, as aforesaid, for twelve months.

"*Eleventh.* The conference shall not nor may nominate or appoint any person to the use and enjoyment of, or to preach and expound God's holy word in, any of the chapels and premises so given or conveyed, or which may be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, who is not either a member of the conference, or admitted into connexion with the same, or upon trial, as aforesaid; nor appoint any person for more than three years successively to the use and enjoyment of any chapels and premises already given, or to be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, except ordained ministers of the Church of England.

"*Twelfth.* That the conference shall and may appoint the place of holding the yearly assembly thereof at any other city, town, or place, than London, Bristol, or Leeds, when it shall seem expedient so to do.

"*Thirteenth.* And for the convenience of chapels and premises already, or which may hereafter be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, situate in Ireland, or other parts out of the kingdom of Great Britain, the conference shall and may, when and as often as it shall seem expedient, but not otherwise, appoint and delegate any member or members of the conference with all or any of the powers, privileges, and advantages, herein before contained or vested in the conference; and all and every the acts, admissions, expulsions, and appointments whatsoever of such member or members of the conference so appointed and delegated as aforesaid, the same being put into writing, and signed by such delegate or delegates, and entered in the journals or minutes of the conference, and subscribed as after mentioned, shall be deemed, taken, and be the acts,

admissions, expulsions, and appointments of the conference, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, from the respective times when the same shall be done by such delegate or delegates, notwithstanding any thing herein contained to the contrary.

"*Fourteenth.* All resolutions and orders touching elections, admissions, expulsions, consents, dispensations, delegations, or appointments and acts whatsoever of the conference, shall be entered and written in the journals or minutes of the conference, which shall be kept for that purpose, publicly read, and then subscribed by the president and secretary thereof for the time being, during the time such conference shall be assembled; and, when so entered and subscribed, shall be had, taken, received, and be the acts of the conference; and such entry and subscription as aforesaid shall be had, taken, received, and be evidence of all and every such acts of the said conference and of their said delegates, without the aid of any other proof; and whatever shall not be so entered and subscribed as aforesaid, shall not be had, taken, received, or be the act of the conference: and the said president and secretary are hereby required and obliged to enter and subscribe, as aforesaid, every act whatever of the conference.

"*Lastly.* Whenever the said conference shall be reduced under the number of forty members, and continue so reduced for three yearly assemblies thereof successively, or whenever the members thereof shall decline or neglect to meet together annually, for the purposes aforesaid, during the space of three years, that then, and in either of the said events, *the conference of the people called Methodists* shall be extinguished, and all the aforesaid powers, privileges, and advantages shall cease, and the said chapels and premises, and all other chapels and premises which now are, or hereafter may be settled, given, or conveyed, upon the trusts aforesaid, shall vest in the trustees, for the time being, of the said chapels and premises respectively, and their successors for ever: UPON TRUST, that they, and the survivers of them, and the trustees for the time being, do, shall, and may appoint such person and persons to preach and expound God's holy word therein, and to have the use and enjoyment thereof, for such time and in such manner as to them shall seem proper."

The second occurrence for which the year 1784 was remarkable, was, as already intimated, the advancement of the spiritual interests of the connexion, by giving a full Christian ministry to the societies in America, just then become independent of the mother country. In this transaction Dr. Coke, already mentioned, bore a prominent part, and in consequence had to endure much obloquy. Dr. Whitehead seems to take pleasure in heaping upon him the grossest calumny. Having been favoured with a much more intimate knowledge of Dr. Coke, and of the business in which he was employed, than Dr. Whitehead ever had, or could have, I think it my duty to state the facts as they occurred. And, in order to elucidate those facts, it is necessary that I should give the reader a short account of that eminent man, who acted so conspicuous a part in the Methodist connexion for many years.

The Rev. THOMAS COKE, LL. D., of the university of Oxford, already mentioned, had joined Mr. Wesley about six or seven years before this period. It was at first thought that, like some other pious clergymen, he would act as an assistant to Mr. Wesley in those chapels in London where the prayers were read and the sacrament administered according to the form of the Church of England, every Lord's day; but the warmth and energy of his mind soon led him to take part in the whole work, wherever Mr. Wesley had need of such an active assistant.

His Life has been published by Mr. Drew; who, for some years before the doctor's decease, assisted him in his literary labours. His biographer, who has executed his task with considerable ability, has however given his readers not only a very defective, but (through wrong information) an erroneous view of several important particulars in the memoirs which he has given to the world. A short view of these facts will not only, it is apprehended, be interesting, considering what a prominent part the doctor acted in the work during the latter years of Mr. Wesley; but it is absolutely necessary, in order to account for the obloquy which Dr. Whitehead has cast upon him respecting those events which I have now to relate in these memoirs of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley.

Dr. Coke, as his biographer truly observes, was infected with infidel principles while at the university, in which he was unhap-

pily strengthened by his ungodly tutor.* From this perilous infection he was in a considerable degree delivered, by reading the works of Bishop Sherlock and some other divines; but he continued a mere theoretic believer till some time after his connexion with Mr. Wesley.

He was, as his biographer acknowledges, naturally ambitious and aspiring; and for some years had made great efforts to obtain preferment in the Church: but finding himself disappointed, and at length shut up in the curacy of South Petherton in Somersetshire, he became very unhappy, and felt the want of that real good, which as yet was unknown to him. At this time he found some comfort by reading, in secret, the prayers composed for King William by Archbishop Tillotson. Those gracious drawings, I have reason to believe, from his own account, was all the experience which he had of divine things till after his union with the Methodists.

About this time the doctor became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Brown, of Taunton, an old friend of Mr. Wesley. (See the note in page 237.) From this gentleman he received some of the writings both of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, which opened to his view scenes of usefulness, accompanied with labour and suffering, to which, till then, he had been a stranger. All that was of God, in his naturally aspiring mind, eagerly seized these openings of a new life; and "the ambitious stirrings" which Mr. Southey has imputed to Mr. Wesley, (not only without, but contrary to, all evidence,) were realized in the active mind of Dr. Coke.

Hearing soon after, that Mr. Wesley was on his way to Cornwall, and would be at Mr. Brown's on a particular day, the doctor resolved to visit that gentleman, and thus obtain an introduction to the great founder of Methodism, whom he now admired above all men.

He found Mr. Wesley as usual mild and easy of access, with an appearance of happiness that exceedingly impressed him. The doctor staid all night; and in the morning, Mr. Wesley having walked into the garden, he joined him there, and made known his situation and enlarged desires. Mr. Wesley, with

* It was chiefly in his cups that this gentleman administered the poison.—"Eh! Coke," he would then say, as well as he could, "do you believe the Adam and Eve story, eh?" And thus get rid of the Bible with a fool-born jest.

marked sobriety, gave him an account of the way in which he and his brother proceeded at Oxford, and advised the doctor to go on in the same path, doing all the good he could, visiting from house to house, omitting no part of his clerical duty; and counselled him to avoid every reasonable ground of offence. The doctor was exceedingly surprised, and indeed mortified. "I thought," said he, when he related the account to me, "he would have said, *Come with me, and I will give you employment according to all that is in your heart.*" But to be thus put off, and confined still to the work of a parish, while such extensive labours and usefulness passed in vision before him, was a disappointment he could hardly bear.

He however began, and his warm and active mind gathering strength in its progress, he proceeded to turn the parish into a kind of Methodist circuit. He visited and preached in every part of it; and as some showed signs of dissatisfaction, and spoke against his proceedings, he cast off all restraint; and after the second lesson, on the Sunday morning, he commenced the practice of reading an account of his intended labours for the week to come, to the amazement of his auditory.

These bold advances soon brought matters to a crisis. The doctor was dismissed from his curacy; and as his opponents found out the day on which he was to leave the town, the bells were rung, and some hogsheads of cider were brought into the street, that those who were so disposed might rejoice over the deliverance of the parish from its Methodist curate.

On Mr. Wesley's next visit to that part of the kingdom Dr. Coke joined him and accompanied him to Bristol. In this city, among a people established in the true faith of the gospel, the doctor's gentlemanly manners, his manifest zeal for religion, and his attachment to Mr. Wesley, gained him universal love and esteem. His biographer, however, has manifested very little knowledge of Mr. Wesley's character, in supposing that he kept the doctor under his own eye for some considerable time, fearing that he might be tempted to turn back, and that he should thus lose a helper that promised to be so useful. In all those things Mr. Wesley always kept his mind perfectly free, knowing his high responsibility. Speaking of his own constant fellow labourers, to whom under God he was indebted for his great success, he observed many years before this time, "The desire of serving

me, as sons in the gospel, was on their part, not mine; my wish was to live and die in retirement." He was still more cautious with respect to the clergymen who joined him. He well knew that only those whom *the Lord of the harvest thrusts forth* into the work would be permanently useful in it; and he certainly was in no bondage respecting Dr. Coke. Upon Mr. Wesley's going to London he left the doctor at Bristol, where he remained a considerable time.

While Dr. Coke continued in that city he became more fully acquainted with the rules of the society into which he had entered. The discipline, which has been detailed in these memoirs, it now became his duty to maintain, and consequently to be present at all the meetings of the society. In these meetings he listened to Christian experience, to which he was himself a stranger; and not unfrequently, without being conscious of the cause, he found himself in that embarrassing situation described by Dr. Edwards, of New England, in his "Considerations on the Work of God," in that province: "How melancholy," observes that great man, "is the case of one who is to act as a shepherd and guide to a people, many of whom are under great awakenings, and many are filled with divine light, love, and joy; to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under those various circumstances; to be put to it to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching, and, from time to time, in private conversation; and, in particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances; to talk to those who come to him as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he had experience as well as they; to force a joyful countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart. What sorrowful work is here! O how miserable must such a person feel! What wretched slavery is this! Besides the infinite provocation of the most high God, and displeasure of his Lord and Master!"

The case of Dr. Coke, who truly wished to do good, was however not so lamentable. He was not in the condition of an ungodly minister, who, for a living, undertakes such a work. The doctor had no stipend, his own fortune being sufficient for his support; and, not being convinced of sin, he felt no such misery. He did not, indeed, like Mr. Southey and others, suppose that those people laboured under a mental disease; on the

contrary, he supposed them sincere and of a sound mind: but he comforted himself with his own supposed advantages. "They have," he said to himself, "a knowledge of God among them which is strange to me; but in philanthropy, and in large views for the good of mankind, I am superior to them."

Dr. Coke had not those advantages in early youth with which Mr. Wesley was so eminently favoured. He had not been brought up 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;' his parents being only attached to the forms, but having no knowledge of the power of religion. He was also an only child, and greatly indulged. I have not, therefore, to trace in him that early work of grace which was so conspicuous in the great subject of these memoirs; rather, I have to represent him as 'a brand plucked from the burning,' from the fire of ambition, and the intoxicating love of the world, so natural to man. He seems to have been altogether ignorant of the higher principle of the gospel, when his longsuffering God directed his steps to a people who were 'prepared of the Lord' to direct *him* to 'that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,' and to a principle of action wholly unknown to the natural man, whatever his talents may be,—'faith that worketh by love.' In this respect he had an advantage which Mr. Wesley had not: he was received, not into the wide field, where he might possibly *find the pearl of great price*, but into the *garden* planted by the Lord, where 'gold, silver, and precious stones,' all the holy fruits of faith, were common to those who believed.

Being called to London, an event which happened on the road was a mean in the hand of Him who 'numbered the hairs of his head,'— 'who worketh all in all,' and who compassionated his ignorance, of teaching him how little real cause he had of self-preference. One of the passengers in the coach in which he travelled was taken with a fit; and, as there was an immediate cry for water, the doctor ran to a brook which he saw at some distance. Having no vessel, he thought of his hat; but on beholding the fine new beaver, decorated with an elegant rose, then common among clergymen, his heart, which he had supposed so large, instantly failed him, and he returned in haste to the scene of distress. A gentleman who was assisting the afflicted man, and had observed with pleasure the doctor's design, exclaimed with surprise and indignation, "What,

sir! have you brought no water?" and instantly ran himself to the brook, and returned with his hat full.

The doctor felt his situation, in the presence of the passengers; but his inward mortification was inexpressible. He was deeply wounded in the very part where he supposed himself invulnerable. *He had trusted in himself that he was righteous*, on a high scale, and had *despised*—or lightly esteemed—*others*. That scale now kicked the beam, and the convicted sinner felt the truth of that word, 'He that trusteth his own heart is a fool,'—'he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.' With his spirit thus wounded he arrived in London.

The doctor was now prepared to attend more seriously to what he heard among a people who were well acquainted with those teachings and reproofs of the Spirit of God, and with that renunciation of 'their own righteousness' which must precede the obtaining of 'that righteousness which is of God by faith.'

His trouble increased. He found himself to be what our Lord calls a *stranger* in the fellowship of his people. The Holy Spirit, who, by fastening one wrong act on the mind of a sinner, can, in the issue, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, convince him of 'all that ever he did,' now showed him that 'in him dwelt no good thing.' But to acknowledge his state, and to take his place among those who "groaned their nature's weight to feel," was a sacrifice as yet too great for him. He was stript of that self-complacency which had served at Bristol as a shield against all the arrows of conviction, and his distress became very great. He felt he had undertaken a work for which he was wholly unfit, and he saw no way of deliverance.

His arrival made some noise, and he had many visiters. Among the number was Mr. Maxfield, who had separated from Mr. Wesley, as already related, and who occupied a chapel in the neighbourhood of Moorfields.* The ardency and strength of this gentleman's mind has been already noted. What Lady Huntingdon had said of him, when first employed in the work, must be fresh in the reader's recollection. After a short preface, he inquired, with his usual promptness, into the doctor's own state: he seemed not to doubt of his justification, (as neither did Mr. Wesley,) but inquired if he were *perfected in love?* The

* What the biographer of Dr. Coke says of Mr. Maxfield's living at South Petherton, and of his being acquainted with the doctor there, is, I believe, an entire mistake.

doctor acknowledged he had not attained that privilege. Mr. Maxfield immediately pressed it upon him with all his might; showing, in his usual strong way, that the blessing was to be received by faith, and consequently that it might and ought to be received now. The doctor was amazed and much embarrassed: he got off, however, from his vehement exhorter as well as he could, informing him that he would maturely consider what had been advanced, and make it a matter of prayer.

The doctor did so; and an intimacy took place between them, the consequence of which was that, through the instrumentality of that extraordinary man, the doctor found rest unto his soul. He obtained that faith which gave his labouring conscience peace; and which, in a mind naturally so ardent, raised him up as on the wings of eagles! He joined from that time in all the exercises of religion with a fervour that surprised many, and caused the people to whom he ministered to glorify God on his behalf.

He confined himself no longer to the duties of a clergyman, but took part in all the work of a regular preacher. Preaching abroad, and in all the chapels; exhorting all with a zeal almost equal to Maxfield himself;* 'instant in season and out of season,' no labours seemed too much for him,—no journeyings too fatiguing; so that Mr. Wesley used to say he was to him as a right hand.

That much of the "infection of nature" (which our church, in conformity with Holy Scripture, states as "remaining even in the regenerate,") still remained in him, must not, and indeed cannot, be denied. 'The wisdom from above' was not always manifest in his zeal; so that those who *sought occasion* were amply supplied with matter for declamation against him. He spared not those whom he thought lukewarm, and consequently they did not spare him. Complaints were sometimes made to Mr. Wesley against what was called his rash spirit and proceed-

* In this account the reader will see much of what has been already related respecting Mr. Maxfield. See page 187.—Mr. Wesley told me that while this very zealous man remained in connexion with him he took care to have Dr. Jones in London at the same time with Mr. Maxfield. The one was remarkable for enforcing the fruits of faith and the duties of the gospel: the other for vehemently insisting on faith itself. Each had his peculiar talent; but labouring together, the people were kept in the safe path of faith and obedience. But Dr. Coke did not need any stimulus to duty. He was 'zealous of good works' from the first day to the last.

ings; but as those complaints were generally made by those who were known to be *lukewarm*, or not well affected, that man of God, who would believe evil of no man, and put the best construction upon every thing, took little notice of these complaints, having generally abundant cause to be satisfied with all the doctor's conduct which came under his own observation, and especially with the humility and meekness with which he received every reproof or advice from his father in God.

I have no intention of giving a biography of Dr. Coke: that is already done. But I think it needful to give this short sketch of this good and very zealous man's character, in order to correct the mistakes of his biographer; and chiefly, that the reader may know the real ground of those unjust censures, which Dr. Whitehead has so liberally heaped upon him in his Life of Mr. Wesley. That life was written to please some who were most offended with Dr. Coke; and we may believe also, that Dr. Whitehead was not without hope that the calumnies which he thus cast upon him would excuse the injury which he had committed against the doctor concerning Mr. Wesley's manuscripts.

I shall now proceed to detail the particulars concerning his being employed by Mr. Wesley in a very extensive missionary work:—a work which led him into his own proper element, and in which he so greatly distinguished himself, not only on the continent of America, but in the West-India islands. There he proved himself an 'able minister of the New Testament' toward those who, without that ministry, would have been 'of all men most miserable.' He thus became the zealous successor of Nathaniel Gilbert, the pious and excellent speaker of the house of assembly in Antigua. The labours of those men, with their able coadjutors, will, through 'the grace of Him who worketh all in all, be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, in the day of the Lord Jesus.'

CHAPTER II.

PROGRESS OF RELIGION IN AMERICA—ORDINATION FOR THE AMERICAN SOCIETIES—OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

AMERICA, unlike other empires, owes all its greatness to religion, especially North America, of which we must now speak.

In 1606 James the First erected two companies for the colonization of New England, then included under the general name of VIRGINIA. But no regular settlements were then formed; a small trade only was carried on with the Indians. But under the violent persecutions of the non-conformists by Archbishop Laud, many of that oppressed people fled for refuge to New England; and, with indefatigable and unremitted zeal, through almost every difficulty and danger that could obstruct so hazardous an undertaking, changed the face of a great tract of country from a waste wilderness to an improved and cultivated land. Many of these first settlers did undoubtedly experience the vital power of godliness, and were joined by a multitude of others that fled from the tyranny of Charles the Second.

For some considerable time all the holy fruits of religion were manifested among them. But, as usual, an uninterrupted flow of prosperity damped the sacred flame; and, perhaps their wars with the Indian nations might also contribute toward it. Then appeared the same spirit among themselves which they had so much opposed in England. The views of mankind were not sufficiently enlarged at that period to enable them to see the importance of universal toleration to the prosperity of society. None of them seem to have had a conception that a most perfect civil amity may be preserved among those who differ in the speculative points of theology. They therefore persecuted the emigrants, who like themselves had left their native country for a more comfortable habitation than they found at home, but who unhappily differed from them either in modes of worship or religious sentiments. Of these the Quakers were the most offensive, and were inhumanly, yea cruelly, treated by them. Mercy and pure religion, inseparable companions, then forsook the land. They lost their piety; and, to say the best of them, were *a flourishing, commercial people*.

In 1729 the Lord raised up that eminent man, Dr. Jonathan Edwards. In his time religion flourished again in New England. A very brief account of this revival I shall give in his own words:

"In the town of Northampton, in New England, after a more than ordinary licentiousness in the people, a concern for religion began to revive in 1729, but more observedly in 1733, when there was a general reformation of outward disorders, which has continued ever since.

"About this time I began to preach concerning *justification by faith alone*. This was attended with a very remarkable blessing. Then it was that the Spirit of God began wonderfully to work among us. A great and earnest concern about the things of God ran through all parts of the town. All talk but of eternal things was laid aside. The conversation in all companies (unless so far as was necessary for the carrying on of worldly business,) was wholly upon religion. Hence there soon appeared a glorious alteration, so that, in 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence almost in every house: parents rejoicing over their children as new-born, husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands.

"God has also seemed to go out of his usual way in the quickness of his work. It is wonderful, that persons should be so suddenly and yet so greatly changed. Many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery; and, in a very little time, old things have passed away and all things have become new with them."

There were many also, in New England and among the Indians, truly converted to God by those eminent and laborious ministers, Mr. Elliott and Mr. Brainerd.

In 1739, Mr. George Whitefield made his second visit to America, and the Spirit of the Most High did indeed rest upon him. He revived that pure religion which was so remarkable in the time of Dr. Edwards, but after his removal had decayed. Great was his zeal and great his success. 'God spake the word, and great was the company of the preachers.' The zealous ministers raised by his labours, who were distinguished by the denomination of *New Lights*, became the most numerous

body in New England: and, strange as it may appear, the old, wise, literary body of Presbyterians, in a synod held among themselves, formally thrust out or excommunicated the majority; declaring, they would have no ministerial union with such an illiterate body of men. But the real ministers of God were not to be silenced by such means. However, this revival also was but of short duration. Formality on the one hand, and Antinomianism on the other, again recovered their ascendancy.

The states of New-York and New-Jersey, the former of which was first settled by the English in 1664; and the latter, some time in the reign of Charles II, were never remarkable for religion till they were visited by some of the members of Mr. Wesley's societies. Being so near New England they indeed partook in a small measure of its revivals, especially those under Dr. Edwards and Mr. Whitefield.

Pennsylvania, which formerly included the little state of Delaware, was possessed originally by the Dutch and Swedes; but was settled by the English in the reign of Charles the Second, under the direction of that great and good man, William Penn, the Quaker. The first of these settlers, as we might naturally expect, were chiefly persons of his own persuasion; and the Quakers make now a very considerable part of that state. They certainly had, and now have, real religion among them. The quaintness of their manners, and their ideas concerning the superior light of their dispensation, have kept them from being much known and from being very useful. But the noble sacrifice of all their slaves, whom they have emancipated to a man, is a proof of the strong religious principle of that people.

In respect to the religion of Pennsylvania (that of the Quakers excepted) we can say but little in its commendation; though it cannot be doubted that Mr. Whitefield kindled the flame of divine love in the hearts of several individuals during his short visits to Philadelphia.

The five states to the south of those already mentioned, viz., Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, may be considered together. The Baptists, who are numerous in some parts of these states, have been useful to thousands, both of whites and blacks. The abilities of their ministers in general were peculiarly small; but their zeal was great, and God was pleased to own it. To this day a considerable mea-

sure of real religion is to be found among them. Many of their preachers having embraced the unscriptural doctrine of Universal Restitution, have introduced thereby much controversy and dissension into their church. Here and there, in that vast tract of country, from the most eastern point of Maryland to the most western point of Georgia, some ministers were also to be found, that sprung from the labours of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield, who were zealous for the salvation of souls. The clergy of the Church of England in these states, in general, presented a melancholy contrast to these true ministers of the gospel. Notwithstanding the purity and many other excellencies of their liturgy, articles, and homilies, they were, with few exceptions, a disgrace to the church of God: nor had their wretched flocks, at the distance of three or four thousand miles from the source of ecclesiastical power, the least hopes of redress. But we acknowledge, and bless God for it, that the change has been abundantly for the better since they have been favoured with an episcopacy of their own.

During the space of thirty years before Mr. Wesley's death several persons, members of his society, emigrated from England and Ireland and settled in various parts of America. About the year 1770 Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New-York, and formed a society of his own countrymen and some of the citizens. About the same time Robert Strawbridge, another local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederic county in Maryland, and preaching there, formed some societies. A little before this period Mr. Webb, a lieutenant in the army, preached at New-York and Philadelphia with great success, and with the assistance of his friends, erected a chapel in New-York, which was the first chapel in Mr. Wesley's connexion in America. Induced by the success he met with, and by an earnest desire of saving souls, he wrote a letter to Mr. Wesley, earnestly imploring him to send missionaries to that continent. Accordingly, Mr. Wesley nominated Mr. Richard Boardman and Mr. Joseph Pilmoor as missionaries for America, who landed at Philadelphia in 1769, and were the first itinerant preachers in connexion with Mr. Wesley on that continent. A few days after their landing Mr. Pilmoor wrote a letter to Mr. Wesley, of which the following is an extract:

"*Philadelphia, Oct.* 31, 1769.

"REVEREND SIR,

"By the blessing of God we are safe arrived here after a tedious passage of nine weeks.

"We were not a little surprised to find captain Webb in town, and a society of about a hundred members, who desire to be in close connexion with you. 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

"I have preached several times, and the people flock to hear in multitudes. Sunday evening I went out upon the common. I had the stage appointed for the horse race, for my pulpit; and I think between four and five thousand hearers, who heard with attention still as night. Blessed be God for field-preaching! When I began to talk of preaching at five o'clock in the morning the people thought it would not answer in America: however I resolved to try, and had a very good congregation.

"Here seems to be a great and effectual door opening in this country, and I hope many souls will be gathered in. The people in general like to hear the word, and seem to have some ideas of salvation by grace."

Mr. Boardman observes, in a letter to Mr Wesley from New-York, dated April 24, 1770: "Our house contains about seventeen hundred hearers. About a third part of those who attend the preaching get in; the rest are glad to hear without. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before. They have no preaching in some parts of the back settlements. I doubt not but an effectual door will be opened among them.—O may the Most High now give his Son the heathen for his inheritance! The number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much."

Mr. Pilmoor visited Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, and preached in those states with considerable success.

About the latter end of the year 1771 Mr. Wesley sent over Mr. Francis Asbury and Mr. Richard Wright to the assistance of the former missionaries. Mr. Asbury was then, as he continued to his death, indefatigable in his labours. He staid not long in the cities. Most of his time he spent in the villages and plantations, forming societies in many places. He frequently complains in his Journal, which was published in America, that his brethren were too fond of the cities; and justly

observes, that no extensive work could be carried on in America unless the preachers devoted more of their time to the plantations; the cities and towns being very few, and a great majority of the inhabitants settled in the interior parts of the country.

In 1773 Mr. Wesley sent over Mr. Thomas Rankin and Mr. George Shadford. When they arrived they found that the societies in New-York and Philadelphia had laid aside almost all discipline, and were little better than a rope of sand. Mr. Rankin, who was a strenuous advocate for all the various branches of the economy established by Mr. Wesley, and was invested by him with considerable authority, soon reduced every thing into order. He and Mr. Shadford laboured for near five years on that continent, travelling through all the states between New-York and North Carolina inclusive, forming societies and preaching the gospel with great success.

"At our first little conference in Philadelphia, July, 1773," observes Mr. Rankin, in his own printed account, "we had about a thousand in the different societies, and six or seven preachers: and in May, 1777, we had forty preachers in the different circuits, and about seven thousand members in the societies; besides many hundreds of negroes who were convinced of sin, and many of them happy in the love of God. Were it not for the civil war, I have reason to believe the work of God would have flourished in a more abundant manner; as both rich and poor gladly embraced the truths of the gospel, and received the preachers with open arms."

When the civil war unhappily became general in that country, Mr. Rankin, with other preachers from England, who had spoken publicly in behalf of the British cause, were obliged to fly for their lives. And of all the European missionaries, Mr. Francis Asbury alone was determined to bear the heat and burden of that day. Though he had preserved a perfect neutrality, and had spoken nothing in public or private on the merits of the war, yet he was obliged, from the suspicions already raised against the societies, to conceal himself for two years, in the county of Kent in Delaware, at the house of a Mr. White, a justice of the peace and a member of the society. In the house of this gentleman he held two conferences with all the preachers he could collect in the midst of the troubles. But a gentleman of Delaware, who became a very celebrated character by his publica-

tions entitled "The Farmer's Letters," JOHN DICKENSON, Esq., predecessor to Dr. Franklin in the government of Pennsylvania, with great candour gave him a strong letter of recommendation, by virtue of which he ventured and continued to travel through the states without any molestation.

Many of the preachers, who had learned, like Mr. Wesley, to be men of one book, scrupled to take the oaths of allegiance to the states in which they respectively laboured, and were consequently fined or imprisoned. But, in every instance, those who were confined soon found some powerful friend, yea, often one who had no connexion with the society, who used his influence with the governor and council of the state, and obtained their liberty. Frequent instances there were, when the preachers were brought before the judges, that they bore such a pointed testimony against sin, and preached with such power the doctrines of the gospel, that the judges were at a loss in what manner to behave to them. Mr. Moore, a preacher in Baltimore, delivered on one of those occasions such a sermon from the bar, as filled the judges and the whole court with astonishment. The assembly of Maryland, partly perhaps to deliver the judges from the trouble which was given them, and partly out of a spirit of candour, passed an act expressly to allow the Methodist preachers, so called, to exercise their function without taking the oath of allegiance.

Some time before this a remarkable occurrence happened in a county in Maryland. Mr. Chew, one of the preachers, was brought before Mr. Downs, then sheriff of the county, and afterward a member of the general assembly of the state. The sheriff demanded whether he was a minister of the gospel. On receiving from Mr. Chew an answer in the affirmative, he required him to take the oath of allegiance. Mr. Chew answered him that he had scruples on his mind, and therefore could not consent at present. Mr. Downs informed him that he was bound on oath to execute the laws, and must, in such case, commit him to prison. Mr. Chew calmly replied, that he by no means wished to be the cause of perjury, and therefore was perfectly resigned to suffer the penalty incurred. "You are a strange man," cried the sheriff, "and I cannot bear to punish you. I will therefore make my own house your prison." He accordingly committed him, under his hand and seal, and kept him in his own house for three months; during which time

the sheriff was awakened and his lady converted. They soon afterward joined the society; and Mr. Downs, with the assistance of some neighbouring gentlemen, built a preaching-house for the society at Tuckaho, the place where he lived.

During the civil war the societies were destitute of the sacraments, except in two or three of the cities. They could not obtain baptism for their children, or the Lord's supper for themselves, from the Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist ministers, but on condition that they would leave the society of which they were members, and join those churches respectively: and almost all the clergy of the Church of England had left the country. The societies in general were so grieved on this account, and so influenced the minds of the preachers by their incessant complaints, that in the year 1778 a considerable number of them earnestly importuned Mr. Asbury to take proper measures, that the people might enjoy the privileges of all other churches, and no longer be deprived of the Christian sacraments. Mr. Asbury's attachment to the Church of England was at that time exceedingly strong: he therefore refused them any redress. On this, the majority of the preachers withdrew from him, and consequently from Mr. Wesley, and chose out of themselves three senior brethren, who ordained others by the imposition of their hands. The preachers thus set apart administered the sacraments to those whom they judged proper to receive it, in every place where they came. However, Mr. Asbury, by indefatigable labour and attention, and by all the address in his power, brought them back one after another; and by a vote of one of the conferences the ordination was declared invalid, and a perfect reunion took place.

When peace was established between Great Britain and the states the intercourse was opened betwixt the societies in both countries. Mr. Wesley then received from Mr. Asbury a full account of the progress of the work during the war; and especially of the division which had taken place, and the difficulties he met with before it was healed. He also informed Mr. Wesley of the extreme uneasiness of the people's minds for want of the sacraments; that thousands of their children were unbaptized, and the members of the societies in general had not partaken of the Lord's supper for many years. Mr. Wesley then considered the subject, and informed Dr. Coke of his design of drawing up a plan of church government, and of establishing an ordination

for his American societies. But, cautious of entering on so new a plan, he afterward suspended the execution of his purpose, and weighed the whole for upward of a year.

At the conference held in Leeds in 1784, he declared his intention of sending Dr. Coke and some other preachers to America. Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey offered themselves as missionaries for that purpose, and were accepted. Before they sailed Mr. Wesley abridged the common prayer-book of the Church of England, and wrote to Dr. Coke, then in London, desiring him to meet him in Bristol, to receive fuller powers, and to bring the Rev. Mr. Creighton with him. The doctor and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol; when, with their assistance, he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey presbyters for America: and being peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England, he afterward ordained Dr. Coke a superintendent, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal, and at the same time the following letter to be printed and circulated in America:

"*Bristol, Sept.* 10, 1784.

"To Dr. COKE, Mr. ASBURY, and our Brethren in North America.

"By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and, in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain.* For many

* A pious prelate (the late Rev. Dr. Horne, bishop of Norwich,) remarks on this transaction, "If a presbyter can ordain a bishop, then the greater is blessed of the less, and the order of all things is inverted." No; not if Mr. Wesley's position be true, that they are *the same order*. The bishop should have overthrown this position (if he could) to have established his own.

years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think the best constituted national church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

"If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them *now*, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us? 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the

primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

Dr. Whitehead, true to the party for whom he wrote, and contrary to his own well-known principles and earnest wishes, so manifest in the statement set forth in the preface to this work, lampoons this whole proceeding, in language that not only sets all sobriety at defiance, but even borders on impiety. He begins by introducing what he calls "part of a letter from one preacher to another," concerning this solemn transaction. I cannot but suspect that the letter was really written by the doctor himself, as it manifests so much spleen as could hardly be felt by any but a disappointed man. If it were really written by any other preacher of that day, I should think it the production of his friend the book-steward, recently mentioned; as he was the only preacher who spoke against Mr. Wesley's ordinations in the conference, some time before he accepted the call of those trustees, by whom the chapel, already noticed, (and, so far as their influence extended, a society also,) was wrested from their spiritual fathers and brethren, and became the property of that preacher during his life. A few expressions in that rancorous epistle will show the spirit of the writer:

"So we have Methodist parsons of our own!—I greatly fear the SON OF MAN was not secretary of state, or not present, when the business was brought on and carried.—Who is the father of this *monster*, so long dreaded by the father of his people and by most of his sons? Whoever he be, time will prove him a *felon* to Methodism, and discover his assassinating knife sticking fast in the vitals of its body. Years to come will speak in groans our religious madness for gowns and bands. Will it not sting a man, that has been honoured by his Lord and Master for many years, to have a black-robed boy, flirting away in the exercise of his sacred office, set over him?" &c. Poor Dr. Whitehead! He was, indeed, stung almost to madness when he wrote, or published to the world, this vulgar philippic.

The *felon*, with his knife, &c., so charitably mentioned, was Dr. Coke, whose zeal had literally *provoked many*. When his incensed calumniator had got possession of Mr. Wesley's MSS.,

as related in the preface, he found among them a letter written by the doctor to Mr. Wesley, which he thought would answer his wretched purpose. This document Dr. Whitehead has given entire. I shall also present it to the reader, not doubting but, in this day, when every malignant prophecy has failed, when no "black-robed boys" have appeared among the plain preachers of the gospel, when no madness for gowns and bands has been manifested, when no such, "flirting" novices have been set over the Lord's favoured servants, and when the circumstances of that day are considered, it will appear that Dr. Coke had much ground for the apprehensions which he expressed, and for the request which he preferred in that letter.

It being determined at Leeds that the ministers, who were to assist Mr. Wesley, should meet him at Bristol; August the 9th Dr. Coke sent him the following letter:

"HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

"The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me, *that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you*, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey, for the following reasons: 1. It seems to me the most Scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches.—2. I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds, that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed, 'that he would not receive any person deputed by you to take any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him;' or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find any the least degree of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury; on the contrary, a very great love and esteem; and I am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against *all events*, and an authority, *formally* received from you, will (I am conscious of it,) be fully admitted by the people; and my exercising the office of ordination without that *formal* authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any other account; I could therefore *earnestly* wish you would exercise that power, in

this instance, which, I have not the shadow of a doubt, but God hath invested you with for the good of our connexion. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will, in any degree, use the power you are pleased to invest me with, farther than I believe absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work.—3. In respect of my brethren, (brother Whatcoat and Vasey) it is very uncertain indeed whether any of the clergy, mentioned by brother Rankin, will stir a step with me in the work, except Mr. Jarrit; and it is by no means certain that even he will choose to join me in ordaining: and propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me that every thing should be prepared, and every thing proper be done that can possibly be done *this side the water*. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house, in your chamber; and afterward (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice,)* give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey I can bring Mr. Creighton down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect to brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known, or not known; if not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with, perhaps, your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

"Your most dutiful,

"T. Coke."†

Dr. Whitehead indulges in some splenetic remarks on this letter, and on Mr. Wesley's conduct in this whole transaction. Not choosing to attack Lord King's position, that bishops and presbyters were, in the primitive church, the same order, (of the truth of which he had no doubt,) he insists, that it does not justify Mr. Wesley; and asserts, that, according to the posi-

* Mr. Fletcher attended the conference in 1784, and was one of the meeting which Mr. Wesley called in order to consider the subject.

† Dr. Whitehead observes, "This letter is taken from an attested copy of the doctor's letter, in Mr. Charles Wesley's handwriting."

tion laid down, "Dr. Coke had the same right to ordain Mr. Wesley, that Mr. Wesley had to ordain Dr. Coke." If this should be granted, what will it amount to? As presbyters of the church they had, certainly, the same right to ordain; and if Dr. Coke had been the father of that great work which is called Methodism, he would in that case have had a right to ordain Mr. Wesley to superintend any part of that work. But Dr. Coke was not the father of that work; he was still a *babe, a son in the gospel,* but remarkable for zeal and activity. His education, rank in life, and station in the Established Church, pointed him out, however, as a proper person to be employed in that new and very delicate situation in which the Methodists were placed by the recent revolution in America. The doctor, certainly, needed all the authority and influence which Mr. Wesley could give him; and if he chose to give it to him according to the forms of the Church of England, which he loved, and which is so truly venerable, who has a right to find fault with him? Certainly, not Dr. Whitehead; who, in all he has said on the subject, has contradicted his own principles.

The doctor concludes his lampoon with supposing, that "the three gentlemen were highly gratified with their new titles, as we see both young and old children gratified with gilded toys."—To these suppositions I shall only say, that those good men, being then called to exercise the duties of the entire Christian ministry, were no doubt much comforted and strengthened in receiving from the father of the work, and from his reverend assistants, that full Scriptural authority, which, in every age of the church, and among all people, has been counted essential to the full exercise of that sacred function in its entire duties; which they were at length so imperiously called to perform; and concerning which, we may hope, they said with the great apostle, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' We need not be at a loss, however, to suppose what were the feelings of Dr. Whitehead on being refused that Scriptural authority, which he sought in the most earnest manner, and to obtain which he was willing to make considerable sacrifices.

Mr. Wesley well knew the difference between the *office* and the *title*. He knew and felt the arduous duties and high responsibility which attaches to the one, and the comparative nothing-

ness of the other. In this respect his brother, with all his high-church zeal, has stated the truth concerning the church which he loved:

> Whatever shines in outward splendour great,
> I give it up,—a creature of the state.

I say *comparative* nothingness; for who can, with sobriety, say that titles are nothing in a national church? Would it have been wise, considering the state of this nation, and indeed of Europe, at the time of the Reformation, to have abolished these titles altogether, which men had been used to identify with those offices for so many generations? Have not real shepherds borne those titles;—men who *naturally cared for the flock*, and who proved it by *laying down their lives for them?* If we allow that these things are, in truth, "a creature of the state," yet it may be asked, Could we, humanly speaking, ever have had a thorough deliverance from the yoke of popery, identified as it was with the state, if the civil government had not adopted the Scriptural creed of the reformers? It is certain, however, that the Lord took that way, and did the work of deliverance by that aid: and while such freedom is given to those who think it their duty to dissent, and also to us who do not, but who are irregular, yet only for the Lord's sake,—may we not at least innocently pray that no rude or ungodly hand may be permitted to hurt that goodly fabric? It still does good; and if we contrast her greatness with the meretricious greatness of former days, we must acknowledge it to be *national Christianity*. Those who wish to 'learn the way of God more perfectly,' have entire liberty so to do.

With respect to the title of *bishop*, I know that Mr. Wesley enjoined the doctor and his associates, and in the most solemn manner, that it should not be taken. In a letter to Mrs. Gilbert, the widow of the excellent Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., of Antigua, a copy of which now lies before me, he states this in the strongest manner.—In this and in every similar deviation I cannot be the apologist of Dr. Coke; and I can state, in contradiction to all that Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Hampson have said, that Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things; nor was he the author of one line of all that Dr. Coke published in America on this subject. His views on these points were very different from those of his zealous son in the gospel. He knew

that *a work of God* neither needed, nor could be truly aided, nor could recommend itself to pious minds, by such additions.

When pressed and goaded by his brother's severe remarks, concerning his thus acting as a bishop, he answered, "I firmly believe that I am a Scriptural Επισκοπος, as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the *uninterrupted succession* I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does in no wise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago." He gave to those Επισκοποι whom he ordained the modest, but highly expressive, title of *superintendents*, and desired that no other might be used. That the Lord has greatly blessed this boon to the American societies is evident by their great and continued increase. The numbers in the various societies, when Dr. Coke went over, were about fifteen thousand. Six years after, they had increased to nearly seventy thousand; and in the year 1820 they were two hundred and eighty thousand!

Tradition is old, and ought to be respected; but the Bible is older, and contains "the only religion of Protestants." 'He that is of God heareth God's word.' A man of one book, like Mr. Wesley, must wonder to see the office of bishop made thus the head of the Christian ministry. Int he apostolic church it was, certainly, a limited and inferior office, appointed by the apostles and evangelists for the care of a particular flock while they continued, according to the original commission, 'to preach the gospel to every creature.'—This was their great and awful charge! to proclaim the Saviour to 'all the world'—their immense diocess!—Mr. Wesley, having obtained the same faith, felt the same call, and surprised the sons of tradition by declaring that he "looked upon all the world as his parish." When the apostolic church became enlarged, and this original commission was forgotten, it is no wonder that the bishops in every place should be considered as the head and fountain of all authority. It answered the design of the civil rulers also, who adopted Christianity as the religion of the empire. By thus setting up the local shepherds they gained the flock in every place. *But from the beginning it was not so.* The "booted apostles," as Mosheim calls those who were sent forth by Constantine and his successors to proclaim the religion of the em-

pire, laboured for the emperor and for his bishops, rather than for the Lord. Hence the corruptions that followed, until the Chief Shepherd removed *the golden candlesticks*, and *the man of sin* enthroned himself in the church; while the impostor Mohammed spread darkness and desolation through those fields which the Lord had so greatly blessed.

With respect to titles, what a simplicity do we find in the book of God! Not one of the apostles calls himself bishop. They call themselves presbyters or elders, sometimes deacons. 'God,' says St. Paul, 'has made us able ministers (in the original, διακονοι, deacons,) 'of the New Testament;' while he calls *his sons in the gospel*, αποστολοι, *apostles of the churches*. So simple is the language of these men of God!—So little anxious were such respecting any distinguishing title where only the propagation of truth was aimed at!

Dr. Whitehead also takes much pains to affix blame on Mr. Wesley on account of the ordinations being secret, that is, not performed before the congregation. When Dr. Whitehead wished to share in the privilege he did not object to that circumstance. There were witnesses enough present on those occasions. In vain the doctor brings forward passages from ancient writers which declare that ministers should be ordained before the church. Certainly they ought, when they are to minister to that church. But the ordination that is the subject of these remarks was the ordination of evangelists truly so called, and who, however lightly esteemed among men, took up the original commission, and were confined to no particular flock. That a competent number of those in the same office should be present was all that was needful; nor do we read of any other way of setting such apart in the apostolic church, where the authority was not limited, as in the case of bishops or pastors and teachers. The jealousy also of that day, which Dr. Whitehead strove to fan into a flame, rendered greater publicity improper. In the present day large congregations assemble to see our missionaries set apart, in the Scriptural way, for their arduous work. 'The Lord has stilled the enemy,' and his people praise him for the consolation.

That Mr. Wesley should never before this time, so late in life, exercise that authority which he had no doubt he possessed, is easily accounted for. He never before had such a *reason*

for exercising it as fully satisfied him. That word of God seemed written on his heart,—'Render to all their due.' He well knew, and ever acted upon that principle, that real religion no more needs the violation of any relative duty in bodies of men than in individuals. He always deplored and condemned that zeal that would unnecessarily violate established order. He saw no precedent for such a zeal in the oracles of God. That a portion of this zeal, however, should never appear in any individuals in the best constituted churches of Christ, is more than we have any right to expect, in the present state of human nature, notwithstanding the great advantages which the history, both of the world and the church, affords us, to bring about a more charitable and reasonable conduct. That Mr. Wesley should, however, maintain this Scriptural and sober principle for so many years, notwithstanding the earnest wish of the preachers to be Scripturally ordained, and the almost incessant opposition and slander which he had to encounter, is truly surprising; and perhaps, no part of his conduct more strongly proves his divine commission.

Dr. Whitehead quotes a passage from a sermon which Mr. Wesley published about two years before his death, as fully corroborating what the doctor has said against Mr. Wesley's ordinations. The text was Hebrews v, 4: 'No man taketh this honour to himself but he who is called of God, as was Aaron.' "In this discourse," says the doctor, "he has clearly shown, that the office of a *priest* was totally distinct and separate from the office of a preacher or expounder of God's word and will, sometimes called a *prophet*; that from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Moses, the firstborn in every family was the priest by virtue of his primogeniture: but any other of the family might be a prophet or expounder of God's will to the people. In the time of Moses the priesthood was restricted to the tribe of Levi; while the preachers, or expounders of God's law might be, and afterward were, of different tribes. In the New Testament these expounders of the law are called νομικοι, or scribes: but few, if any of them, were priests.

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, sent out *apostles* and *evangelists* to proclaim the glad tidings of peace to all the world. Afterward, *pastors* were appointed to preside over and to build up in the faith the churches

that were formed. 'But,' says Mr. Wesley, 'I do not find that ever the office of an *evangelist* was the same with that of a *pastor*, frequently called a *bishop*. I cannot prove, from any part of the New Testament, or from any author of the three first centuries, that the office of an *evangelist* gave any man a right to act as a *pastor* or *bishop*. I believe these offices were considered as quite distinct from each other till the time of Constantine.'

"Mr. Wesley then goes on to observe, that among the Presbyterians, in the Church of England, and even among the Roman Catholics, the office of an *evangelist* or *teacher* does not imply that of a pastor, to whom peculiarly belongs the administration of the sacraments. All Presbyterian churches, that of Scotland in particular, license men to preach throughout the whole kingdom before they are ordained. And it is never understood that this appointment to preach gives them any right to administer the sacraments. 'Likewise,' says he, 'in our own church persons may be authorized to preach, yea, may be doctors in divinity, as Dr. Atwood at Oxford was, when I resided there, who are not ordained at all, and consequently have no right to administer the Lord's supper. Yea, even in the Church of Rome itself, if a lay-brother believes he is called to go on a mission, as it is termed, he is sent out, though neither priest nor deacon, to execute that office, and not the other.' And Mr. Wesley declares," says Dr. Whitehead, "that he and his brother considered the lay-preachers in the light of *evangelists*, or *preachers* only, when they received them as helpers in the work, or they never should have admitted them."

I was with Mr. Wesley in London when he published that sermon. He had encouraged me to be a man of *one book*, and he had repeatedly invited me to speak fully whatever objection I had to any thing which he spoke or published. I thought that some things in that discourse were not to be found in the BOOK, and I resolved to tell him so the first opportunity. It soon occurred. I respectfully observed, that I agreed with him, that the Lord had always sent, by whom he would send, instruction, reproof, and correction in righteousness, to mankind; and that there was a real distinction between the prophetic and priestly office in the Old Testament, and the prophetic and pastoral office in the New, (where no priesthood is mentioned but that of our Lord;) but I could not think, that what he had said concerning

the evangelists and the pastors, or bishops, was agreeable to what we read there; viz., that the latter had a right to administer the sacraments, which the former did not possess. I observed, "Sir, you know, that the *evangelists* Timothy and Titus were ordered by the apostle to ordain *bishops* in every place; and surely they could not impart to them an authority which they did not themselves possess."—He looked earnestly at me for some time, but not with displeasure. He made no reply, and soon introduced another subject. I said no more. The man of one book would not dispute against it. I believe he saw his love to the church, from which he never deviated unnecessarily, had in this instance led him a little too far.

He had foreseen that the increase of the societies so far beyond all that he had looked for in his own days, would necessarily oblige the people to assemble in their own chapels, and at length to have all the privileges which the Holy Scriptures secure to all Christian believers. In many places the parish church would not contain the Methodist society, even if the other parishioners were excluded in order to accommodate them. To give, therefore, to the people under his care all the advantages needful for their growth in grace, and yet continue a friendly connexion with the Established Church, seemed to him a *desideratum*. Here a change, in some degree, seemed as necessary, therefore, as in America, though for a different reason. He had firmly resisted, for many years, every effort made by those who were for a more liberal plan, as they termed it. Even Thomas Walsh, in that early day, deplored his obstinacy respecting the Roman Catholics. He expostulated with him in the bitterness of his soul, not through any enmity to the Established Church, with which he constantly communicated, but from tender love to those desolate children of his faith and prayer, and for whom chiefly he was prodigal of life. "Sir," said he, "they must have the ordinances of Christ, but they will not go to Church. They will not hear those men, whose ungodly lives they daily behold; but they will joyfully communicate with those by whom they have been brought to God. You may open the kingdom of heaven to those multitudes who have hitherto walked in the way to hell, *as they have been led*. Beware how you shut it against them!"—Mr. Wesley reverenced this man of God—this 'debtor to all men'—this apostle of the Roman Catholics,—beyond all the

men of his day; but he was steadfast and unmoveable in his great views, not seeing, even in that hard case, *a good reason* for deviating. I believe this conversation was the last they had on earth; and I am constrained to believe that Mr. Wesley's inflexibility hastened the lamented death of that great and good man. Many sorrows compassed him about, while hard and continual labours shattered the clay tenement; but this seemed to oppress him more than all. He found rest in a premature grave, giving up his soul into the hands of his merciful and faithful Creator, exclaiming, "*My Beloved is mine and I am his!*—his for ever."

But while Mr. Wesley yielded to the *good reason*, when it appeared thirty years after, he yielded with the same unostentatious simplicity which marked his path from the beginning. He was much grieved with something of the contrary spirit which was manifest in his sons in the gospel, who were chiefly employed in conducting that necessary work. We have already seen something of it in his letter to Mrs. Gilbert. A letter now before me, and which he wrote when I was with him, will clearly show how much he felt that deviation from the simplicity which is in Christ, in those whom he much loved. It was written to Mr. Asbury, and is dated *London, Sept.* 20, 1788. After speaking on some general subjects, he adds,

"There is, indeed, a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans, and the relation wherein I stand to *all* the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists: I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore I, in a measure, provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide were it not for me—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

"But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be *little;* you study to be *great.* I *creep;* you *strut* along. I found a *school;* you a *college!* Nay, and call it after your own names!* O beware! Do not seek to be *something!* Let me be nothing, and 'Christ be all in all!'

"One instance of this, of your *greatness*, has given me great

* Cokesbury College, twice burned down. The name was formed from the names of its founders—Coke and Asbury.

concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called *bishop?* I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call *me* a knave or a fool; a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content: but they shall never, by my consent, call me *bishop!* For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

"Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart: and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

There were few men that stood higher in Mr. Wesley's esteem, for disinterested attachment to the cause of God, and arduous labour therein, than Mr. Asbury, who lived and died honoured by all his brethren. Mr. Wesley, in writing to him, as above stated, acted according to his own rule. (See page 47.)—"Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom."—Mr. Asbury meekly bore the fatherly reproof; but he was not convinced that he had acted wrong: and certainly every church of Christ derives from its Divine HEAD, and ONLY MASTER, a right to whatever the *Holy Scriptures* makes their privilege, or marks the OFFICE of its PASTORS. That Mr. Asbury lost none of his veneration for this father in the gospel, on this occasion, will appear from the following extract from his Journal, lately published:

"The public papers have announced the death of that dear man of God, JOHN WESLEY. He died in his own house in London, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, after preaching the gospel sixty-four years.—When we consider his plain and nervous writings; his uncommon talent for sermonizing and journalizing; that he had such a steady flow of animal spirits; so much of the spirit of government in him; his knowledge as an observer; his attainments as a scholar; his experience as a Christian; I conclude his equal is not to be found among all the sons he hath brought up, nor his superior among all the sons of Adam. For myself, notwithstanding my long absence from Mr. Wesley, and a few unpleasant expressions in some of

his letters written to me, (occasioned by the misrepresentation of others,) I feel the stroke most sensibly; and, I expect, I shall never read his works without reflecting on the loss which the church of God and the world have sustained by his death."

Mr. Asbury was, however, mistaken when he supposed that Mr. Wesley was influenced by "the misrepresentations of others," and not by the facts stated, when he wrote those letters.

I have thought it my duty thus to show how invariably Mr. Wesley cherished those principles which so eminently shone in the early period of his Christian course, and which issued in what may be called a hatred of all display, excepting that of truth, love, and victory over the world, to the latest period of his life,—and even when the Lord had given him so great a people, and such a number of able coadjutors. But did he not, upon this occasion, a little forget what he had written in his address to the societies in America after their separation from the mother country?*—"They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church: and we judge it best that they should stand fast in the liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."—But the association in his mind, between the assumed title and the display connected with it in the later ages of the church, was too strong. He could not, at that moment, separate the plain laborious bishops of the American societies, where there is no legal establishment, from the dignified prelates of the mighty empire of Great Britain.

That our brethren who are in that office are true Scriptural bishops, I have no doubt at all; nor do I wish that the title should be relinquished, as it is grown into use, and is known, by every person in the United States, to designate men distinguished only by their simplicity and abundant labours.

There was no danger that a man of this spirit should be suffered to deviate from the truth, in any essential point, in conducting this work of God. Mr. Wesley firmly adhered to the Scriptures, the primitive church, and the Church of England. When the necessity of the case, however, was apparent, he minded only the Scriptures, believing that men may err, but 'the word of God shall abide for ever.' Where the necessity did not appear, he highly respected antiquity, and would never

* See page 274.

deviate from the accumulated wisdom of ages, or shock the common sense of mankind. The moment he saw the necessity of giving an entire gospel ministry to his people, he revolted from conferring it in any way not sanctioned by the apostolic practice, or the usage of the purest ages that succeeded them. Hence, he never would acknowledge any ministry that was not conferred in the Scriptural, apostolic, and ancient way, by 'laying on of hands.' Of all the men who ever attempted to break down these fences, there were none he loved more than the two sons of his venerable friend, the vicar of Shoreham, Charles and Edward Perronet, and Nicholas Norton, whom I personally knew and highly respected. These men were truly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the 'ministry of the word.' They felt and walked in the power of it; but when they would maintain, *that the Spirit's call to teach* implied also *a call to the full pastorship*, and would no longer be indebted to what they called a carnal ministry, in partaking of the ordinances of Christ, he withstood them with all the authority that the *Chief Shepherd* had given him. Several letters passed between them on this subject. They contended for liberty of conscience. This he fully allowed, but at the same time maintained his own liberty, and the authority which he believed the Lord had given him respecting the people of his charge. "You believe," said he, "it is a duty to administer: do so, and herein follow your own conscience. I verily believe, it is a sin; which, consequently, I dare not tolerate; and herein I follow my conscience. Yet this is no *persecution*, [which they, in their letters, alleged it to be,] were I to separate from our society those who practise what, I believe, is contrary to the word and destructive of the work of God.—Keep from proselyting others, and keep your opinion till doomsday, self-inconsistent, unprimitive, and unscriptural as it is."

When, however, Dr. Hey, of Leeds, whose Life has been recently published, (and in which some of these things are noted,) and others, attempted to hedge him in on the other hand, and so constrain him to make that, which he fully believed to be a revival of primitive Christianity, a mere appendage to the church as by law established, they found he would not walk in the trammels of men, or consent to their narrow and some-

times, worldly proposals.* When his own beloved brother and partner in the work would have aided their views, even this did not shake him. He would go on with his Divine Leader, and they found that, as it was said of old, they could not 'bind him

* Mr. Wesley has repeatedly observed to me, that he could rarely keep professional men, either in law or medicine, long in the society. While young in their apprenticeship, or pursuing their studies, they held fast their first desire,—"To flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," (the one purpose for which the Wesleyan Methodists are associated,) and were thankful for the help which the society afforded. This was the case with Dr. Hey (I use the title by which he was commonly known) for a longer period than usual. After he rose to eminence in his profession, the society, by its strict discipline, became rather a burden than a help. He then began, as his respectable biographer, Mr. Pearson, informs us, to reason upon his situation, "and finally determined, in the year 1781, on the *expediency* of withdrawing from the Methodists." But Dr. Hey could not submit to retire in the usual quiet way. He drew up a long statement of his fears for the Established Church, and added a set of propositions, amounting to an entire change of the whole Methodist constitution, and to which the whole connexion must submit, as the condition of his remaining with them! He desired permission of Mr. Wesley to read this statement to the conference then assembled at Leeds, which was readily granted.

The doctor being introduced, a most extraordinary scene was exhibited. A member of a particular society, without one other member to second or countenance him, gravely proposing to the Methodist conference (assembled to consult about and transact the business of the whole connexion, according to the rules that govern the body) to consent to the overthrow of their whole discipline, and to act immediately on the speculations of Dr. Hey! He declared, as Mr. Pearson informs us, "that if they rejected his proposals he could no longer remain a member!" In an Independent congregation perhaps this would have excited but little surprise; but, I believe, we may safely say that such a proposal was never before made to any such united body of people. We may also add, I think, never did such a proposal meet with a more gentle dismissal: Mr. Wesley only observing, (after hearing quite enough to learn the doctor's design,) that, "as much business lay before them, brother Hey must defer reading the remainder of his paper to another opportunity." But brother Hey troubled them no more. He withdrew from the society, and no doubt in his own eyes in a very honourable way; observing, (which we are told he often did,) "He did not leave the Methodists—they left him."

We readily allow that Mr. Wesley and the Methodist conference *refused* to have Dr. Hey to rule over them, and of consequence, to rule over the whole connexion. But the society at Leeds continued, in company with Dr. Hey, to attend the church and sacrament; but he would no longer go with them to the society, or partake of that Christian fellowship which had been for so many years light and life to him. About twenty years ago, when I was stationed at Leeds, I had the privilege of attending the church and sacrament with a goodly company of the Methodists; and so far we still claimed a brotherhood with Dr. Hey, who had departed from the society more than twenty years before. He well knew, and so does his biographer, that he might have continued a Churchman and a Methodist to the hour of his death if he had been so minded. But, to use a common saying, the good man "saw things in another light." Perhaps the fear expressed by the apostle, (2 Cor. xi, 3,) may give some elucidation to the worthy doctor's departure from the friends of his youth and from his first calling.

for the maidens, or part him among the merchants,' either of the world or of the church. There were not wanting those who, from the beginning of the work having departed from simplicity, fondly hoped that he also would,

> "Though born for the universe, narrow his mind,
> And to party give up what was meant for mankind."

But they prevailed not. He held on his even course, and

> "Squared his useful life below by reason and by grace."

To use his own expression, he *crept* along, 'through honour and through dishonour;' and could neither be beat down nor turned out of the way. The Lord shined upon his path, and none of *his works have been burned.* Even in this last, and by those who watched for his halting supposed to be his greatest deviation, 'the wisdom that is from above' is apparent. The amazing extension and wholly religious nature of the work speaks for itself; evidencing the utter impossibility that it ever could be strictly united to any human system; while its friendliness to all, and especially to our venerable establishment, shows it to be the work of 'Him who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' That time now appears swiftly approaching.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUANCE OF MR. WESLEY'S LABOURS—VISIT TO IRELAND—ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN THE FRENCH ISLANDS—MR. WESLEY'S VISIT TO THEM—LATTER DAYS AND DEATH OF MR. CHARLES WESLEY—A REVIEW OF HIS CHARACTER.

DURING the latter years of Mr. Wesley's life he was a wonder unto many. To see a man, at the age of fourscore years and upward, persevering in daily labours, from which even the young and vigorous would recede as from an intolerable burden: to see him rising in the morning at four; travelling often from thirty to sixty or seventy miles a day; preaching daily two, three, or four, yea sometimes five sermons; reading, writing, visiting the sick, conversing with his friends, and superintending the societies wherever he came: and, in all this labour and care,

to see him a stranger to weariness, either of body or mind:—This was *a new thing in the earth*, and excited the admiration of mankind.

I have already noted the observations which he made on his birth-day, in Holland, in the year 1783, that, "by the mercy of God, his eyes were not waxed dim, and what strength of body or mind he had thirty years before, the same he had then." And we find similar remarks yearly in his Journal till the year 1787.

In that year he visited Ireland; and, passing through the north of that kingdom, he called upon a respectable clergyman, whose kind attentions in his sickness at Tandragee, in the year 1775, had laid him under obligations. After he had quitted this agreeable family, reflecting on some painful deviations which he had observed, he sent the clergyman the following letter. It will serve as one instance, to show that faithfulness for which he was so remarkable.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"I have obligations to you, on many accounts, from the time I first saw you; particularly for the kind concern you showed when I was ill at Tandragee. These have increased upon me every time that I have since had the pleasure of waiting upon you. Permit me, sir, to speak without reserve. Esteem was added to my affectionate regard when I saw the uncommon pains you took with the flock committed to your care; as also, when I observed the remarkably serious manner wherein you read prayers in your family. Many years have passed since that time; many more than I am likely to see under the sun. But before I go hence I would fain give you one instance of my sincere regard; the rather, because I can scarce expect to see you again till we meet in a better world. But it is difficult for me to do it, as I feel myself inferior to you in so many respects. Yet permit me to ask a strange question, Is your soul as much alive to God as it was once? Have you not suffered loss from your relations or acquaintance, that are sensible and agreeable men, but not encumbered with religion? Some of them, perhaps, as free from the very form as from the power of it. O sir, if you *lose* any of *the things which you have wrought*, who can make you amends for that loss? If you do *not receive a full reward* what equivalent can you gain? I was pained, even at your

hospitable table, in the midst of those I loved so well. We did not begin and close the meal in the same manner you did ten years ago! You was then, contrary to almost universal custom, unfashionably serious in asking a blessing and returning thanks. I know many would blame you for it: but surely the Lord said, 'Servant of God, well done!' Wishing you and your lovely family every blessing,

"I am, reverend and dear sir,

"Your obliged and affectionate brother and servant,

"J. WESLEY."

On his return he notes in his Journal:—"For seventy years I have observed that England abounds with prophets who confidently foretel many terrible things. They generally believe themselves, but are carried away with a vain imagination; and are seldom undeceived, even by the failure of their predictions, but still believe they will be fulfilled some time or other."—Such was the constant sobriety of his mind, and so did he reprove the pestilent spirit of curiosity, too common even among good men.

The following paper is without date; and though it was probably written before this period I shall insert it here, omitting an observation or two which could not now be considered interesting. The style is truly Wesleyan, and the thoughts may be of use even in our day. We have still men in the nation, both pious and learned, who are as fanciful as Mr. Hutchinson himself.

"To the Reverend Dean D——.

"REVEREND SIR,

"When Dr. Bentley published his Greek Testament, one remarked, 'Pity but he would publish the Old; then we should have two New Testaments!' It is done. Those who receive Mr. Hutchinson's emendations certainly have two New Testaments! But I stumble at the threshold. Can we believe that God left his whole church so ignorant of the Scripture till yesterday? And if he was pleased to reveal the sense of it *now*, to whom may we suppose he would reveal it? 'All Scripture,' says Kempis, 'must be understood by the same Spirit whereby it was written.' And a greater than he says, 'Them that are *meek* will he guide in judgment, and them that are *gentle* will he learn his way.' But was Mr. Hutchinson eminently meek and gentle?

"However, in order to learn all I could from his works, after

first consulting them, I carefully read over Mr. Spearman, Mr. Jones's ingenious book, and the Glasgow Abridgment. I read the last with Mr. Thomas Walsh, [already mentioned,] the best Hebræan I ever knew. I never asked him the meaning of a Hebrew word, but he would immediately tell me how often it occurred in the Bible, and what it meant in each place! We then both observed, that Mr. Hutchinson's whole scheme is built upon etymologies; *the most uncertain foundation in the world, and the least to be depended upon.* We observed, secondly, that if the points be allowed, all his building sinks at once: and thirdly, that setting them aside, many of his etymologies are forced and unnatural. He frequently, to find the etymology of one word, squeezes two radices together; a liberty never to be taken, where a word may fairly be derived from a single radix.

"But may I hazard a few words on the points? Mr. H. affirms they were invented by the Mazorites, only thirteen or fourteen hundred years ago, in order to destroy the sense of Scripture. I doubt this: who can prove it? who can prove they were not as old as Ezra; if not coeval with the language? Let any one give a fair reading only to what Dr. Cornelius Bayley has offered in the preface to his Hebrew Grammar, and he will be as sick of reading without points as I am; at least, till he can answer the doctor's arguments he will not be so positive upon the question.

"As to his theology, I first stumble at his profuse encomiums on the Hebrew language. But it may be said, Is it not the language which God himself used? And is not Greek too the language which God himself used? And did he not use it in delivering to man a far more perfect dispensation than that which he delivered in Hebrew? Who can deny it? And does not even this consideration give us reason at least to suspect that the Greek language is as far superior to the Hebrew, as the New Testament is to the Old? And indeed if we set prejudice aside, and consider both with attention and candour, can we help seeing that the Greek excels the Hebrew as much in beauty and strength as it does in copiousness? I suppose no one from the beginning of the world wrote better Hebrew than Moses. But does not the language of St. Paul excel the language of Moses as much as the knowledge of St. Paul excelled his?

"I speak this, even on supposition that you read the Hebrew, as I believe Ezra, if not Moses, did with points. For if we read it in the modern way without points, I appeal to every competent judge, whether it be not the most equivocal."—The paper has been partly destroyed.

In the countries which have hitherto been considered, (the Isle of Man excepted,) the English language has been universally spoken. But Divine Providence led Mr. Wesley, with the preachers in connexion with him, into an unexpected line of usefulness, promising the happiest results.

The islands of Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney, are situate in St. Michael's bay, near the coast of Normandy. They are the only remains of the Norman dominions annexed to Great Britain by William the Conqueror. The inhabitants in general (those of the two principal towns excepted) speak only French.

Jersey was known to the ancient Romans under the name of *Cæsarea*. It is twelve miles in length, and contains about twenty thousand inhabitants. Guernsey is seven or eight miles long, and contains about fifteen thousand people. These two islands are exceedingly fertile and healthy. Alderney is about eight miles in circumference, and has about three or four thousand inhabitants.

In a regiment of soldiers, which was sent over to Jersey in the French war before the revolution, there were a few serious Christians who had heard the gospel in one of the seaport towns of England. These men, finding no help for their souls in the island, wrote to Mr. Wesley, entreating him to send them a preacher. Mr. Brackenbury, a gentleman of fortune in Lincolnshire, who had joined the society, and soon afterward preached in connexion with Mr. Wesley, was present when the letter was received, and offered his service, as he had some acquaintance with the French language. Mr. Wesley readily accepted the offer. Mr. Brackenbury set off for Jersey, rented a house in the town of St. Helier, preached the gospel through the island, and was the instrument of turning many from their sins to God. At first his religious assemblies were greatly disturbed, particularly in the parish of St. Mary, by a miserable set of ungodly men, who, on an appeal to the civil magistrate, were fined and obliged to give security for their good behaviour.

In the year 1786 Mr. Wesley sent another preacher, Mr. (now Dr.) Adam Clarke, to the island of Jersey. Mr. Clarke preached several times in the town of St. Aubin, surrounded by a very violent mob, from whom he received much abuse, and was often in danger of losing his life. The rioters tore the house in which he preached almost to pieces. At another time one of the magistrates headed a large mob and pulled down Mr. Clarke from the pulpit with his own hands. The drummer of the St. Aubin militia was then called, who had the honour of violently assaulting the minister of God, and afterward of drumming him through and out of the town. Mr. Clarke, however, was not to be intimidated by the usage he met with, but continued his visits and labours till he at last outweathered the storm. Regular preaching was then established in the town, and even the mob themselves reverenced the preacher.

From this time, religion flourished more and more in the island of Jersey. Many preachers were raised among the natives, and societies formed all over the island.

In the course of these events a shopkeeper of the island of Guernsey, whose name was Arrive, visited Jersey, and, under the preaching of Mr. Brackenbury, was convinced of sin. He then invited Mr. Brackenbury to visit Guernsey. He went and was universally well received. Many of the gentry opened their houses to him and permitted him to preach in their parlours. Dr. Coke, who about this time visited the French islands, followed Mr. Brackenbury in Guernsey and formed the first society in that island. Afterward Mr. Clarke, with much pain and difficulty, accompanied by many remarkable providences, erected a very commodious chapel in the town of St. Peter, in which a large congregation regularly attended. Much good was done, till a foppish minister (as a pious man then on the island observes,) came there from England and introduced doubtful disputations, respecting the decrees of God, among the people, and thereby exceedingly injured the congregation and the work in general. "It nearly cost me my life," says the same person, "to bring back into the way of salvation those whom he had been so unhappy as to turn out of it."

Mr. De Queteville, a native of Jersey, was also very useful in the island of Guernsey, particularly in the country parts, where the French language alone is spoken. But he endured

great persecutions. The most horrid things were laid to his charge. A prosecution was carried on against him in the supreme court with the design of procuring a sentence of banishment. But the very witnesses who were employed to swear the falsest things against him, and most probably intended it when they first appeared before the court, were yet strangely led to give the most pointed evidence in his favour, which entirely counteracted all the designs of his enemies.

In the beginning of the year 1787 Mr. Clarke visited the isle of Alderney. When he arrived he knew not where to go: he had no acquaintance in the island, nor had any person invited him thither. For some time he was perplexed in reasoning on his situation, till that word of the God of missionaries powerfully impressed his mind, 'Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house,—and in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give.' Luke x, 5, 7.

On this he took courage and proceeded to the town, which is about a mile distant from the harbour. After having walked some way into it, he took particular notice of a very poor cottage, into which he found a strong inclination to enter. He did so, with—'Peace be to this house!' and found in it an old man and woman, who, understanding his business, bade him "welcome to the best food they had, to a little chamber where he might sleep, and (what was still more acceptable) to their house to preach in." He now saw clearly the hand of Providence in his favour, and was much encouraged.

Being unwilling to lose any time, he told them he would preach that evening if they could convene a congregation. The strange news spread rapidly through the town; and long before the appointed hour a multitude of people flocked together, to whom he spoke of 'the kingdom of God,' nearly as long as the little strength he had, after the fatigues of his voyage, remained. When he had concluded, it was with much difficulty he could persuade them to depart, after promising to preach to them again the next evening. He then retired to his little apartment, where he had not rested twenty minutes when the good woman of the house came and entreated him to preach again, as several of the gentry (among whom was one of the justices) were come to hear what he had to say.

He went down immediately, and found the house once more

full. Deep attention sat on every face, while he showed the great need they had of a Saviour, and exhorted them to turn immediately from all their iniquities to the living God. He continued in this good work about an hour, and concluded with informing them what his design was in visiting their island and the motives that induced him thereto.

Having ended, the justice stepped forward, exchanged a few very civil words with him, and desired to see the book out of which he had been speaking. He handed his Bible to him. The justice looked at it with attention, and returned it with apparent satisfaction. The congregation then departed; and the concern evident on many of their countenances fully proved that God had added *his* testimony to that of his servant.

The next evening he preached again to a large attentive company. But a singular circumstance happened the following day. While he was at dinner, a constable came from a person in authority, to solicit his immediate appearance at a place called the Bray (where several reputable families dwell, and where the governor's stores are kept,) to preach to a company of gentlemen and ladies, who were waiting, and at whose desire one of the large store-rooms was prepared for the purpose. He immediately went, and in a quarter of an hour after his arrival a large company was assembled. The gentry were not so partial to themselves as to exclude the sailors or labourers. All heard with deep attention, except an English *gentleman*, so called; who perhaps meant to show the islanders how much *he* despised sacred things.

The next Lord's day, in the evening, he preached again in the same place, to a much larger congregation, composed of the principal gentry of the island. The day following being the time appointed for his return, many were unwilling he should leave them, saying, "We have much need of such preaching and such a preacher: we wish you would abide in the island, and go back no more." However, the vessel being aground, he was detained till the next morning, to the great joy of his new friends, when, after a tender parting, he left the island.

After this, the native preachers, raised up in Jersey and Guernsey, visited this little island: and by their means a chapel has been erected, a large society formed, and many souls brought to the knowledge of God.

On Monday, August 6, 1787, Mr. Wesley, with Dr. Coke and Mr. Bradford, set off from the Manchester conference to visit the French islands. On the 11th they sailed from Southampton, but contrary winds and stormy weather obliged them to fly for refuge first into the port of Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight, and afterward into that of Swanage. On the 14th they expected to reach the Isle of Guernsey in the afternoon; but the wind turning contrary, and blowing hard, they were obliged to sail for Alderney. But they were very near being shipwrecked in the bay. Being in the midst of rocks, with the sea rippling all around them, the wind having totally failed. Had they continued in this situation many minutes longer the vessel must have struck on one or other of the rocks. So they went to prayer, and the wind sprung up instantly, and brought them about sunset to the port of Alderney.

At eight the next morning Mr. Wesley preached on the beach near the place where he lodged; and before his hymn was ended had a tolerable congregation. Soon after he had concluded, the governor of the island waited upon him with very great courtesy. After which, he with his company sailed for Guernsey.

On his arrival he went into the country to the house of Mr. De Jersey, a gentleman of fortune, whose whole family have been converted to God. At five the following morning he preached in a large room of Mr. De Jersey's to a very serious congregation; and in the evening, to a crowded audience in the preaching-house in the town of St. Peter. On the 18th he and Dr. Coke dined with the governor, who studied to show them every mark of civility. On the 20th he sailed for the Isle of Jersey. Mr. Brackenbury received him on his arrival, and in his house he frequently preached to exceeding serious congregations. "Even the gentry," observes Mr. Wesley, speaking of his visit to this island, "heard with deep attention. What little things does God use to advance his own glory! Probably," continues he, "many of these flock together because I have lived so many years! And perhaps even this may be the means of their living for ever!"—In the country he preached in English, Mr. Brackenbury interpreting sentence by sentence; and even in this inconvenient way of speaking, God owned his word. Being detained a considerable time by contrary winds, the

assembly-room was offered him, in which he preached to very large congregations, and to the profit of many.

On the 29th, the wind still continuing to blow from the English coast, he returned to the Isle of Guernsey; where the winds, or rather a kind Providence, detained him till the 6th of September. Hardly a gentleman or lady in the town of St. Peter omitted a single opportunity of attending his ministry. So universal and steady an attendance of the rich and the gay he never before experienced. During this visit he was favoured with singular powers of elocution; and delivered a series of discourses peculiarly suited to his hearers. On the 6th a ship sailed for Mount's bay in Cornwall; and, the wind not permitting him to sail for Southampton, he took his passage in it, and on the next day landed at Penzance.

There is now a surplus of native preachers in the French islands, several of whom have visited France, and have formed societies there: so that there is a prospect of the work of God spreading in that large and populous kingdom.

In February, 1788, his 85th year, Mr. Wesley observes, "I took a solemn leave of the congregation at West-street, by applying once more what I had enforced for fifty years, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith.' The next day we had a very numerous congregation at the New chapel, (in the City-road,) to whom I declared, in the words of St. Paul, 'the whole counsel of God.' I seemed now to have finished my work in London. If I see it again, well: if not, I pray God to raise up others, that will be more faithful and more successful in his work."

It was always in February, generally the last week, that he left London and began his spring journeys. Those times of departure were always solemn and edifying. The solemnity was much increased at this time by the state of his beloved and venerable brother's health. Mr. Charles Wesley had been for some time declining, and it was painfully anticipated that we should soon lose 'the sweet singer of our Israel,' and 'one of the stars in his right hand' who had begun and continued the great work. We have seen the differences as well as the union of the brothers. Nothing, however, could separate them from their Lord or from each other. Toward the close of life Mr. C. Wesley seemed to have adopted more liberal sentiments and more comfortable views of the work of religion. He gene-

rally feared much; it was his besetting weakness. But love triumphed over fear. In one of his last letters to his brother, dated April 9, 1787, he observes, "I served West-street chapel on Friday and Sunday. Next Saturday I propose to sleep in your bed. —Stand to your own proposal: 'Let us agree to differ.' I leave America and Scotland to your latest thoughts and recognitions; only observing now, that you are exactly right.—Keep your authority while you live; and, after your death, *detur digniori*—or rather, *dignioribus*. You cannot settle the succession: you cannot divine how God will settle it.—Have the people of —— given you leave to die, E. A. P J. P***."

The quotation above is an allusion to the dying words of Alexander the Great. Dr. Whitehead, as usual, supposes that Mr. C. Wesley used the expression—*Let it be given to the* WORTHIEST—as an irony against the preachers. This is quite in character. But Mr. C. Wesley now entered more into his brother's views; and knowing that it was a work of God in which they had been employed, he believed that God alone, as he observes, could settle the succession. And the Lord did settle it in a way that joyfully surprised even the wisest and most pious in the connexion. He continued the preachers in their office, and gave them unanimity. There were no '*battles of shaking*'—no perverse disputations—but they agreed, to a man, to take up his plan (so truly distant from *all* sectarianism) as he left it: having proved it, for more than fifty years, to be truly primitive and apostolic.

In this letter, speaking of genius, he observes, "I never knew a genius that came to good. What can be the reason? Are they as premature in evil as in good? or do their superior talents overset them? *Must* every man of a superior understanding lean to, and trust, and pride himself in it?—I never envied a man of great parts: I never wished a friend of mine possessed of them.

"Poor J. Henderson! What has genius done for him? ruined his fortune and ruined his body. Last night I heard he was dying of a putrid fever. We prayed for him at the table: but I know not whether he is alive or dead. His sickness was sent

* *Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter Johannes*: "John, Presbyter of the Church of England." This signature, I believe, Mr. John Wesley sometimes used in the early part of life, when writing to his brother.

to prepare him either for paradise or for orders.* Such a messenger may, perhaps, take Sam. or Charles from the evil. I never sought great things for them; or greater for myself, than that I may escape to land—on a broken piece of the ship. It is my daily and hourly prayer, that I may escape safe to land, and that an entrance may be administered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Whitehead observes, "Mr. Charles Wesley had a weak body and a poor state of health during the greatest part of his life. I believe he laid the foundation of both at Oxford, by too close application to study and abstinence from food. He rode much on horseback, which probably contributed to lengthen out life to a good old age. I visited him several times in his last sickness, and his body was, indeed, reduced to the most extreme state of weakness. He possessed that state of mind which he had been always pleased to see in others—unaffected humility and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transports of joy, but solid hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace."

The circumstances of his death are related by his daughter, Miss Wesley, in a letter to her uncle Mr. John Wesley, as follows:

"DEAR AND HONOURED UNCLE,

"We were all present when my dear respected father departed this life. His end was, what he particularly desired it might be, *peace!*

* He was the son of Mr. Richard Henderson, one of the itinerant preachers; and was accounted the best scholar in the university of Oxford, where he lived till near his last illness. He was educated at Kingswood school; and, when twelve years old, was taken to Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca to teach the classics there. Mr. Wesley's account of him, in his Journal, (May, 1789,) is, that "with as great talents as most men in England, he lived two-and-thirty years, and did—just nothing!"—Not a vestige of his writings remains! This was owing to what some would call a remarkable cross providence. He used to visit his father at Hannam near Bristol in the summer vacation. He there studied intensely, and wrote largely. His MSS. he stowed in a large trunk without a lock. Returning home some time before his last illness, he flew to his treasure, but found the trunk empty. He inquired of Mrs. Henderson, who called up the servant and asked for the papers in the trunk. The girl, who had been hired that year, replied, with great simplicity, "La! Ma'am, I thought they were good for nothing, and so I lighted the fires with them during the winter."—Mr. J. Henderson looked at his excellent mother-in-law for some time, but spoke not a word. He then turned into his study, and was never known to mention the subject more.—Did these MSS. contain the "physic of the soul?" From what I have seen of his writings, I fear not. He was a great speculator in theology, as well as in other things. There was, however, hope in his end. 'The broken and contrite heart God will not despise.'

"For some months past he seemed totally detached from earth; he spoke very little, nor wished to hear any thing read but the Scriptures. He took a solemn leave of all his friends. I once asked if he had any presages that he should die? He said, 'No; but his weakness was such, that he thought it impossible he should live through March.' He kindly bade me remember him; and seemed to have no doubt but I should meet him in heaven.

"All his prayer was, 'Patience and an easy death!' He bade every one who visited him to supplicate for these, often repeating, 'An easy death!'

"He told my mother, the week before he departed, that no fiend was permitted to approach him; and said to us all, 'I have a good hope!'

"When we asked if he wanted any thing, he frequently answered, 'Nothing but Christ.' Some person observed, that the valley of the shadow of death was hard to be passed: 'Not with Christ,' replied he.

"On March the 27th (after a most uneasy night) he prayed, as in an agony, that he might not have many such nights. 'O my God!' said he, 'not many.' It was with great difficulty he seemed to speak. About ten days before, on my brother Samuel's entering the room, he took hold of his hand, and pronounced, with a voice of faith, 'I shall bless God to all eternity that ever you were born: I am persuaded I shall!'

"My brother Charles also seemed much upon his mind: 'That dear boy,' said he, 'God bless him!' He spoke less to me than to the rest, which has since given me some pain. However, he bade me trust in God and never forsake him, and then, he assured me, he never would forsake me!

"The 28th, my mother asked if he had any thing to say to us: raising his eyes, he said, 'Only thanks! Love! Blessing!'

"Tuesday and Wednesday, he was not entirely sensible. He slept much, without refreshment, and had the restlessness of death for, I think, the whole week.

"He was eager to depart; and if we moved him, or spoke to him, he answered, 'Let me die! Let me die!'

"A fortnight before, he prayed with many tears for all his enemies, naming Miss ——. 'I beseech thee, O Lord, by thine agony and bloody sweat,' said he, 'that she may never feel the pangs of eternal death.'

"When your kind letter to my brother came, (in which you affectionately tell him that you will be a father to him and my brother Samuel,) I read it to our father. 'He will be kind to you,' said he 'when I am gone: I am certain your uncle will be kind to all of you.'

"The last morning, (which was the 29th of March,) being unable to speak, my mother entreated him to press her hand if he knew her, which he feebly did.

"His last words which I could hear, were, 'Lord—my heart—my God!' He then drew his breath short, and the last so gently, that we knew not exactly the moment in which his happy spirit fled.

"His dear hand was in mine for five minutes before and at the awful period of his dissolution.

"It often had been his desire that we should attend him to the grave; and though he did not mention it again (as he did the place of his burial) during this illness, we all mean to fulfil his wish. Trusting we shall be supported, as we have been hitherto, in our afflicting situation,

"I am,

"Your afflicted and dutiful niece,

"S. WESLEY.

"*Chesterfield-street, April* 4, 1788."

A few days before his death he composed the following lines. Having been silent and quiet for some time, he called Mrs. Wesley to him, and bid her write as he dictated:

In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?*
Jesus, my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
O could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity!

Thus died, March 29, 1788, aged seventy-nine years and three months, the truly reverend CHARLES WESLEY. He was buried, April 5, in Marybone churchyard, at his own desire. The pall was supported by eight clergymen of the Church of England. On his tombstone are the following lines, written by

* Viz., from that distressing feebleness: the smile of Christ would thus redeem his feeble dying nature.

himself on occasion of the death of one of his friends: they could not be more aptly applied to any person than to Mr. Charles Wesley:

With poverty of spirit blest'd,
Rest, happy saint, in Jesus rest;
A sinner saved, through grace forgiven,
Redeem'd from earth to reign in heaven!
Thy labours of unwearied love,
By thee forgot, are crown'd above;
Crown'd, through the mercy of thy Lord,
With a free, full, immense reward!

Dr. Whitehead observes, "Mr. C. Wesley was of a warm and lively disposition; of great frankness and integrity; and generous and steady in his friendships. His love of simplicity, and utter abhorrence of hypocrisy, and even of affectation in the professors of religion, made him sometimes appear severe on those who assumed a consequence on account of their experience, or were pert and forward in talking of themselves and others. In conversation he was pleasing, instructive, and cheerful; and his observations were often seasoned with wit and humour. His religion was genuine and unaffected. As a minister, he was familiarly acquainted with every part of divinity; and his mind was furnished with an uncommon knowledge of the Scriptures. His discourses from the pulpit were not dry and systematic, but flowed from the present views and feelings of his own mind. He had a remarkable talent of expressing the most important truths with simplicity and energy; and his discourses were sometimes truly apostolic, forcing conviction on the hearers in spite of the most determined opposition. As a husband, a father, and a friend, his character was amiable. Mrs. Wesley brought him five children, of whom two sons and a daughter are still living. The sons discovered a taste for music and a fine musical ear at an early period of infancy which excited general amazement; and they are now justly admired by the best judges for their talents in that pleasing art."

His poetical talents were of the first order. It is concerning *his* compositions that his brother Mr. J. Wesley writes such strong encomiums in his preface to his large hymnbook. "In these hymns," says he, "there is no doggerel, no botches, nothing put in to patch up the rhyme; no feeble expletives. Here is nothing turgid or bombastic on the one hand, or low and

creeping on the other. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning. Here are (allow me to say) both the purity, the strength and the elegance of the English language, and, at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity."

He wrote short hymns on most of the remarkable passages of the Old and New Testament, and very largely on some parts of both. His Hymns and Sacred Poems are an invaluable treasure. There is not a point of divinity, doctrinal, experimental, or practical, which he has not illustrated in verse; which, for purity, and often for sublimity, may vie with any in the English language. But they especially evidence, that the mind of the writer was deeply impressed with his subject and fully acquainted with the religion of the heart.

It has been said by some, who knew him superficially, that the poet was spoiled by religion, else he would have shined in the higher walks of that science. But had he been so unfaithful to him who called him as to leave paradise for parnassus, there could be no certain fulfilment of these conjectures, as the Lord might take away even those natural gifts. Specimens are, however, still extant, which fully show that he had genius equal to the highest walks of poetry, and taste to direct it, so as to excite admiration in the best informed. I shall give some specimens from his translations of the most admired classics, and fear not to rank them with either Dryden or Pope.

—Fuit ante Helenam mulier teterrima belli
Causa: sed ignotis perierunt mortibus omnes
Quos Venerem incertam rapientes, more ferarum, etc.
Viribus editior cædebat, ut in grege taurus.

Full many a war has been for woman waged,
Ere half the world in Helen's cause engaged;
But unrecorded in historic verse,
Obscurely died those savage ravishers:
Who, like brute beasts, the female bore away,
Till some superior brute re-seized the prey.
As a wild bull, his rival bull o'erthrown,
Claims the whole subject-herd, and reigns alone.

—Turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter
Certabant pugnis, dein fustibus atque ita porro
Pugnabant armis, quæ post fabricaverat usus.

The human herd, unbroken and untaught,
For acorns first and grassy couches fought:

With fists, and then with clubs, maintain'd the fray,
Till, urged by hate, they found a quicker way,
And forged pernicious arms, and learn'd the art to slay.

Jupiter antiqui contraxit tempora veris,
Perque hiemes æstusque et inæquales autumnos,
Et breve ver spatiis exegit quatuor annum.

The God of nature, and her sovereign king,
Shorten'd the primitive perennial spring:
The spring gave place, no sooner come than past,
To summer's heat, and winter's chilling blast;
And autumn sick, irregular, uneven:
While the sad year, through different seasons driven,
Obey'd the stern decree of angry heaven.

——*Irrupit venæ pejoris in ævum*
Omne nefas: Fugere pudor, verumque, fidesque
In quorum subiere locum fraudesque doliqne
Insidiæque et vis, et amor sceleratus habendi.

A flood of general wickedness broke in
At once, and made the iron age begin:
Virtue and truth forsook the faithless race,
And fraud and wrong succeeded in their place.
Deceit and violence, the dire thirst of gold,
Lust to possess, and rage to have and hold.

Vivitur ex rapto: non hospes ab hospite tutus:
Filius ante diem patrios inquirit in annos;
Victa jacet pietas; et virgo cæde madentes,
Ultima cœlestum terras Astræa reliquit.

They live by rapine. The unwary guest
Is poison'd at the inhospitable feast.
The son, impatient for his father's death,
Numbers his years, and longs to stop his breath;
Extinguish'd all regard to God and man:
And Justice, last of the celestial train,
Spurns the earth drench'd in blood, and flies to heaven again.

The classical reader will perceive, in all these examples, how exactly the sense is given, while the translation has all the freedom of original thought.

God can debase the highest genius, and render groveling the most exquisite. Perhaps, those writers whom the world have most admired, were never truly turned to God, and, consequently, could not turn from God to court the applause of men; it was their original element, from which they departed not. A poetic censure, pronounced by old Mr. Samuel Wesley upon the great, but unhappy, John Dryden, (as related to me by Mr. John Wesley,) is strikingly appropriate. Supposing the great

poet and critic to stand before the judgment-seat, (even if he should find mercy,) he exclaims—

"How will he wish that each high-polish'd line,
That makes vice pleasing, and damnation shine,
Had been as dull as honest Quarles' or mine!"

Mr. Charles Wesley was soon delivered from this bewitching danger. He 'rendered to God the things that were God's,' and glorified him with *all* his ransomed powers. The world will not, cannot, appreciate the beauties of sacred poetry. Mr. Pope's "Universal Prayer" has been admired: I will put one stanza of it before one of Charles Wesley's, on a subject nearly similar:

POPE.—The blessings thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away,
For God is pleased when man receives:
T' enjoy is to obey.

This is very true; but is it not very flat? Let us hear our religious poet:

C. WESLEY.—Come then, our heavenly Adam, come,
Thy healing influence give;
Hallow our food, reverse our doom,
And bid us EAT AND LIVE.

Earth then a scale to heaven shall be;
Sense shall point out the road;
The creatures all shall lead to thee,
And all we taste be God!

It has been said, "that one born a poet is a poet in every thing." I have often thought of this sentiment when contemplating the character I am striving to portray. He had great eccentricity, even from a child. Divine grace soon corrected this constitutional exuberance; but something of it innocently remained throughout his whole life. When at the university, in early youth, his brother (as he informed me) was alarmed whenever he entered his study. *Aut insanit homo, aut versus facit.**—Full of the muse, and being short-sighted, he would sometimes walk right against his brother's table, and, perhaps, overthrow it. If the "fine phrenzy" was not quite so high, he would discompose the books and papers in the study,—ask some questions without always waiting for a reply,—repeat some poetry that just then struck him—and at length leave his

* "The man is mad, or making verses."

brother to his regularity; but all this was soon corrected by 'the wisdom from above.'

His complete knowledge of the classic writers, and his high relish for their beauties, when it could be drawn from him, (for he was dead even to that kind of applause,) has often excited my surprise how he could bring himself into the bondage of regular study, which he must have done to attain such excellence. But his brother Samuel was his tutor, and kept him, *pro imperio*, to his books till the drudgery was over, and then the stores of Greek and Roman poetry were a sufficient stimulus. One day, after having talked on religious subjects for some time, he broke out,—"Come, I'll give you two hundred lines of Virgil." He began, and it was Virgil indeed. I question if the great poet was ever more honoured. The prosody was as truly Roman as the language.

When he was nearly fourscore, he retained something of this eccentricity. He rode every day (clothed for winter even in summer) a little horse, gray with age. When he mounted, if a subject struck him, he proceeded to expand and put it in order. He would write a hymn thus given him, on a card (kept for the purpose) with his pencil in shorthand. Not unfrequently he has come to our house in the City-road, and, having left the pony in the *garden* in front, he would enter, crying out, "Pen and ink! pen and ink!" These being supplied, he wrote the hymn he had been composing. When this was done, he would look round on those present, and salute them with much kindness, ask after their health, give out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity. He was fond of that stanza upon those occasions:

There all the ship's company meet,
  Who sail'd with the Saviour beneath;
With shouting each other they greet,
  And triumph o'er sorrow and death.

The voyage of life 's at an end,
  The mortal affliction is past;
The age that in heaven they spend,
  For ever and ever shall last!

It seemed to me that he could never study regularly after he was delivered from tutors and governors. His hymns and sacred poems, which will be admired beyond any thing on that subject when the age shall have a truly religious taste, perhaps owed

much of their strength and excellence to that circumstance. His feelings were strong, his affections warm, and his imagination ardent; and, as he was a master of language, the subject flowed from him in an order that no study could supply. But he seldom, if ever, wrote a line upon any subject that was given to him. He admired Mr. Fletcher beyond all men; but he never, I believe, wrote a line upon his death. His brother requested him to write an elegy upon that occasion, "which," said he, "I will print with my funeral sermon." He made no reply, but seemed to nod assent. Some time after, I asked Mr. J. Wesley if he had received the elegy. He replied, "No: my brother I suppose is waiting for a thought. Poets you know are magotty." The thought I believe never came: yet he wrote something upon almost every thing that occurred. He wrote a whole set of hymns (which were published) on the riots in London in the year 1780. There was a beauty as well as a feeling in those hymns which evidenced the piety, strong affection, and high taste, of the mind that gave them birth. One circumstance is remarkable in those compositions: the measure varies according to the progress of the threatening ruin, and concludes with that kind (the ten-lines measure) which is only proper for joy and thanksgiving. On almost every thing that affected his most compassionate heart he wrote something. The awful end of the celebrated Miss Ray, who was shot coming out of Covent-Garden Theatre, produced from his feeling mind some most moving elegiac stanzas.

Numberless examples might be given of his genius and taste; but, however unfashionable it may appear, I cannot but give the palm to his "Family Hymnbook." Such accumulated strength and beauty of expression, in presenting the daily wants, pains, trials, and embarrassments of a family, to *the God of the families of the whole earth*, surely never before was presented to the suffering children of men. It seems as if he had, after he became a domestic man, noted every want that flesh is heir to within that circle, and that his one desire was to elevate and direct the subjects of the *curse* to that only *remedy* that turns all into blessing! We expect a man of real genius to be great where the subject is inspiring; but to be great in the privacies of common life, to be a true poet (while the man of God equally appears) in those littlenesses, so called, of daily occurrence,

shows an elevation and spirituality of mind that has been rarely, if ever, equalled. A shrewd judge of human nature has said, that no man ever appeared great in the eyes of his valet-de-chambre. Charles Wesley was as great in the eyes of the retired partners of his domestic joys and sorrows as in the schools of philosophy and the arts, or the dangers and toils of the field in which he entreated sinners to be reconciled unto God!

In this last mentioned glory his brother alone was his superior, and that chiefly by continuance. Men of God alone can conduct a work of God. Those only who have passed through the conflict that awaits those who *come to God*, can truly direct those who encounter the same perils, nor can any other safely superintend those who *walk with God*. The excellent Scott, lately gone to his reward, has recorded those trials which he had to endure with those who were the children of his faith and prayer, and has noted the same fears and perplexities which his pious friend Newton confided to his friendly heart. Those who beget children in the Lord, should never cease to superintend them, knowing the wiles of the devil, and the deceitfulness of the human heart; nor should any clerical forms hinder that superintendence. Mr. John Wesley felt this; and, according to the excellent form of his ordination, he "forsook all other cares and studies" that would hinder or cramp this one great and divine obligation, and persevered in that sacred work to the end of his life. He lamented that his devoted brother ever left his side. Much may be said, and with truth, of the great tenderness of that brother's spirit, the weakness of his body, and the degree of constitutional depression to which he was subject, and which was increased by the care of a family. For several years he rose above all these weights, and the Lord was with him of a truth; nor did he forsake him in his retirements. But his gifts were extraordinary, and the call to exercise them, in defiance of all that nature pleads for, seemed imperative. Yet, though he comparatively departed from the great public work, I have abundantly showed he never departed from the Lord.

I have now before me the strongest testimony that can be given at this day, that he refused a living of five hundred pounds a year, choosing to remain among the people that he loved. He also refused a large fortune, left to him by a lady whose

relatives had quarrelled with her; telling her, in his usual short way, "it was unjust." The lady, after trying in vain to bend his spirit, informed him that she "had struck his name out of her will; but that, nevertheless, her family should not possess the fortune." Being advised to accept the fortune, and give it to the relatives—"That is a trick of the devil," said he, "but it won't do. I know what I am now; but I do not know what I should be if I were thus made rich."

As a preacher, he was 'mighty in the Scriptures,' and possessed a remarkable talent of uttering the most striking truths with simplicity, force, and brevity. His ministerial gift was in one respect truly extraordinary: it came the nearest of any thing I ever witnessed to that which we have reason to believe was the original way of preaching the gospel. It is well known that the Greek word which we render *to preach*, signifies to proclaim as a herald. The herald is to bring forward nothing of his own, but to deliver the proclamation of the king his master. Hence the astonishing effects which accompanied the word in the primitive days. 'I rejoice,' says St. Paul, 'that ye received the word, not as the word of man, but as it is, indeed, the word of God, which effectually worketh in you who believe. Our word came not unto you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' Our Lord, declaring his commission, says, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach [proclaim] the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to publish the acceptable year of the Lord.' Man is the same at this day; God is the same; and these effects *now* follow, when men, who have themselves been thus healed and set at liberty, proclaim, by the same Spirit, the gospel of God; and when 'it is mixed with faith in those who hear it.' Where the man who is not himself a subject of this work, takes some notes out of the king's proclamations, and thus forms a proclamation of his own, we need not wonder that no such effects follow—that no sinners are converted to God. Much of this power of truth rested on Mr. J. Wesley, Mr. Fletcher, and others; but on none more conspicuously than on Mr. Charles Wesley, while he gave himself up entirely to the work. His sermon before the

university of Oxford, in the year 1742, in his course as a student of Christ church, on Ephesians v, 14, is an example of this way of proclaiming the gospel, in which he so greatly excelled; but it falls short of many discourses which he delivered in the highways and to large auditories in his own chapels. The scholar was under *some* restraint while preaching at St. Mary's, knowing the state of many in his learned congregation, and the need of preserving order in his discourse; but where only God and conscious sinners were before him, it seemed as if nothing could *withstand the wisdom and power with which he spake:* to use the expression of a pious man, "It was all thunder and lightning." Even when he retired from the itinerant work, I have known him thus favoured and thus great, so that I should not have wondered at beholding the whole congregation on their knees, or prostrate on their faces before God, crying for mercy! But though these times were not of frequent recurrence, he was always *the savour of life* to those who *waited upon God;* but those of the congregation who looked for a regular discourse, concerning which they might give their judgment, were seldom satisfied: he was either an ambassador *for* God, or he was nothing. He would not *preach himself* in any sense of that expression.

In the three or four last years of his life, he visited the prisoners under sentence of death in Newgate. Having become acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Villete, the ordinary, he had full liberty for this work, and frequently preached what is called "the condemned sermon." I attended him upon one of those occasions, and witnessed, with feelings which I cannot describe, the gracious tenderness of his heart. I saw the advantage of proclaiming the gospel to those who knew they were soon to die, and who felt that they had greatly sinned. He composed many hymns, most strikingly suited to their unhappy condition; and used to come, as before mentioned, to the chapel-house in the City-road, and, after reading those hymns to us, he used to call us to unite in prayer for these outcasts of men. When we arose, something of that peculiarity would sometimes appear which I have already noted. He would ask, "Can you *believe?*" And upon our answering "Yes, sir," he would flourish his hand over his head, and cry out, "We shall have them all!" and immediately hasten away to the cells to hold out life to the dead.

But I must conclude a subject that lies near my heart, and of which I could never be weary. Yet I must mention the remarkable gift which he possessed, of promptness in answering attacks, or replying to the remarks of those who attempted to hedge him in. Soon after the work of God began, the question of Absolute Predestination was introduced among the people, and was soon followed by Antinomianism. Mr. Charles Wesley was roused to the most determined opposition against this evil, which was making havock of the people around him. One day, he was preaching in Moorfields, and having mentioned those things, he added, "You may know one of these zealots by his bad temper." A person in the crowd immediately vociferated, "You lie!" "Ha!" says Mr. C. Wesley, "have *I drawn out leviathan with a hook?*"

An anecdote, which he related to me himself, is perhaps still more striking. When that dignified character, Dr. Robinson, primate of Ireland, and who was raised to the *temporal* peerage, was at the Hot-wells near Bristol, he met Mr. C. Wesley in the pump-room. They were both of Christ-church, Oxford. The archbishop seemed glad to see his old fellow collegian, and conversed with him freely. After some time, he observed, "Mr. Wesley, you must be sensible that I have heard many things of you and your brother; but I have not believed them: I knew you better. But one thing has always surprised me,—your employing laymen."

C. W.—It is your fault, my lord.

Archbishop.—My fault, Mr. Wesley?

C. W.—Yes, my lord, yours and your brethren's.

Archbishop.—How so, sir?

C. W.—Why, my lord, you *hold your peace*, and so *the stones cry out.*

They took a turn in silence. His grace however rallied:

Archbishop.—But I hear they are unlearned men.

C. W.—Very true, my lord; in general, they are so: so *the dumb ass rebukes the prophet.*

His grace immediately turned the conversation.

I shall conclude this sketch of the character of this great and most estimable man, by expressing my conviction of him also, as of his brother, that

"I ne'er shall look upon his like again!"

CHAPTER III.

THE THREE LAST YEARS OF MR. WESLEY'S LIFE—HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH—THE INSCRIPTION ON HIS TOMB—HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

THE long life graciously dispensed to these brothers in the flesh and in the Lord, was a blessing to the people under their care. The want of the personal superintendence of Mr. C. Wesley, in his latter years, was but little felt while his brother continued in the full enjoyment of his vast powers. But the time drew near when he also must prove, that 'it is appointed unto men once to die.' This awful hour began now to be very generally anticipated, accompanied with inquiries concerning the probable consequences of his death to that great work of which he had been the father, and still continued the chief instrument. He alone seemed without carefulness. That it was *a work of God*, and consequently that it would no more come to an end than the *word* that was given, and by which it had been formed, seemed never for a moment to depart from his mind. That his death must be sudden, was a very general thought; "for, if the people apprehend danger, they will keep him here while prayer will be heard." Careful to do the work of Him that sent him, all other care he cast upon Him in whom is the life of man.

December 31, 1788, he makes the following remarks:—"A numerous company concluded the old year with a very solemn watchnight. Hitherto God hath helped us; and we neither see nor feel any of those terrible judgments which, it was said, God would pour out upon the nation, about the conclusion of the year."—And again notes, that, "for near seventy years, I have observed, that before any war or public calamity England abounds with prophets, who confidently foretel many terrible things. They generally believe themselves; and are seldom undeceived, even by the failure of their predictions."

On his birth-day, (June 28, 1788,) Mr. Wesley observes, "I this day enter on my eighty-sixth year. And what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so for bodily

blessings also! How little have I suffered yet, by 'the rush of numerous years!' It is true I am not so *agile* as I was in times past: I do not run or walk so fast as I did. My *sight* is a little decayed: my left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read. I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple, (occasioned by a blow received some months since,) and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain and partly to the rheumatism. I find likewise some decay in my memory with regard to names, and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard twenty, forty, or sixty years ago. Neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, (though I want but a third part of the food I did once,) nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in travelling or preaching. And I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and I believe as correctly, as ever.

"To what cause can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein; and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children.

"May we not impute it as inferior means:

"1. To my constant exercise and change of air?

"2. To my never having lost a night's sleep, sick or well, at land or at sea, since I was born?

"3. To my having sleep at command, so that whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes, day or night?

"4. To my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning?

"5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years?

"6. To my having had so little pain in my life, and so little sorrow, or anxious care?

"Even now, though I find pain daily in my eye, or temple, or arm, yet it is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time.

"Whether or not this is sent to give me warning that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle I do not know; but be it one way or the other, I have only to say,

My remnant of days
I spend to his praise
Who died the whole world to redeem:

Be they many or few,
My days are his due,
And they all are devoted to him!"

It had been reported that Mr. Charles Wesley had said a little before he died, that his brother would outlive him but one year. Mr. Wesley did not pay much attention to this, but he seemed to think, that considering his years, and the symptoms of decay which he had marked in himself, such an event was highly probable. Yet he made not the least alteration in his manner of living, or in his labours. He often said to me, during that year, "Now what ought I to do in case I am to die this year? I do not see what I can do but to go on in my labour just as I have done hitherto." And in his Journal he remarks, "If this is to be the last year of my life, I hope it will be the best. I am not careful about it, but heartily receive the advice of the angel in Milton,

'How *well* is thine: how *long* permit to heaven.'"

In conversing on this subject, before he left London, he observed to me, "Mr. (afterward Sir) James Stonehouse said, many years ago, that my brother and I should die in the harness. My brother did not, but I believe I shall."

He accordingly refused to listen to the advice of many who loved him, and contrary to their earnest entreaties went to Ireland at the usual time. He travelled through that kingdom once more, preaching and meeting the societies as he had used to do. While on this journey he was attacked with a complaint entirely new to him,—a *diabetes*. Being at that time in London, he wrote to me, and described the symptoms of this disorder, desiring me to consult Dr. Whitehead, and let him know what the doctor should advise. I did so, and the doctor wrote for him; but he observed to me, that if the complaint should continue it would shorten his life; his advanced age could not bear it. The complaint abated, but he was never entirely delivered from it; it gave him some uneasiness even to the last.

In Dublin he made the following remarks on his birth-day: "This day I enter on my eighty-seventh year. I now find I grow old.—1. My *sight* is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, except in a strong light.—2. My *strength* is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since.—3. My *memory* of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed: I am obliged to stop a little to recollect them. What I should be

afraid of is, (if I took thought for the morrow,) that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either *stubbornness*, by the decrease of my understanding, or *peevishness*, by the increase of bodily infirmities. But thou shalt answer for me, oh Lord my God!"

On the first day of the following year, (1790,) he remarks: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning. I have a lingering fever almost every day. My motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labour. I can preach and write still."

Being in the house with him when he wrote thus, I was greatly surprised. I knew it must be as he said; but I could not imagine his weakness was so great. He still rose at his usual hour, four o'clock, and went through the many duties of the day, not indeed with the same apparent vigour, but without complaint, and with a degree of resolution that was astonishing. He would still, as he afterwards remarks, "do a little for God before he dropped into the dust."

I should greatly rejoice to be able to testify that his days of weakness were days of uninterrupted tranquillity. That he might enjoy even more than

"The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy,"

was certainly the wish of every benevolent mind. God had made all those who had been his enemies in years past, to be at peace with him. But he had still to contend with that 'jealousy' which 'is cruel as the grave,' and never to be satisfied.

He often observed, that in a course of fifty years, he had never, either *premeditatedly* or *willingly* varied from the Church of England in one article, either of doctrine or discipline; but that through *necessity*, not *choice*, he had slowly and warily, and with as little offence as possible, varied in some points of discipline, by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing lay-preachers, by forming and regulating societies, and by holding yearly conferences; but that he did none of these things till he was convinced of the necessity of them, and could no longer omit them but at the peril of his soul. And his constant wish and prayer was, that all who laboured with him, or were under his care, might herein tread in his steps.

To straiten the terms of church communion is seldom ser-

viceable to a church. Were it certain that none are of the Church of England who violate its rules, it would follow that the church has exceeding few members, even among the clergy. There are but few of these who do not secretly disapprove of some of the articles, and openly violate many of the canons. It would be safer, as well as more liberal, to allow every one to be of the church who attends its worship and receives its sacraments; and it will be hard to prove they are not. A national church must comprehend all the king's subjects, especially all who are willing to be so comprehended.

The generality of the preachers and people in connexion with Mr. Wesley, were of the established church. Nevertheless, as a defence against the violence of brutal men, the greater number of the preachers and chapels were licensed according to the *toleration act*. That act, we are sensible, was made for the protection of those who dissent from the established church, and particularly to free them from the penalties of the conventicle act. The preachers who laboured with, and the societies which were formed by, Mr. Wesley, reposed, however, under the shadow of the act of toleration. But about three years before Mr. Wesley's death, certain *friends of the church* resolved to 'deal wisely with them.' They considered, "These men profess to be of the Church of England. What then have they to do with the toleration act? They shall have no benefit from it." And they acted accordingly. In vain did those who applied for licenses plead that they only desired to defend themselves against the violence of ungodly and lawless men, and to avoid the penalties of an act, which, perhaps, was made to prevent *seditious* meetings, but in reality forbids *religious* assemblies of every description, except in the churches of the Establishment. The answer was short, "You shall have no license, unless you declare yourselves Dissenters." Some, who considered that the holding meetings for prayer or preaching, without the authority of the Diocesan, was in fact a kind of dissent, declared their willingness (though others refused this concession) to be called Dissenters in the certificate. But neither did this avail them. They were told, "You must not only profess yourselves Dissenters; you must declare that you scruple to attend the service or sacraments of the church, or we can grant you no relief, for the act in question was made only for those who have these scruples."

In various places both preachers and people were thus treated. In the mean time the informers were not idle. If any one dared to have preaching, or a meeting for prayer or Christian fellowship in his house, information was given, and all that were present at the meeting were fined, according to the penal clauses laid down in the conventicle act. A great majority of those who thus offended were tradesmen and labourers, who severely felt the fines which were thus levied upon them. Some appealed to the quarter-sessions, but no relief could be obtained; they had no license, and therefore the law, as thus interpreted, showed them no mercy.

Mr. Wesley saw this evil with a degree of pain which he had seldom experienced. He perceived whereto it tended, and that, if persisted in, it would oblige him to give up the work in which he had been engaged, and which he believed to be the work of God; or to separate from the Established Church. This was to him a most painful alternative. Wishing to be relieved from it, he stated the case to a member of parliament, a real friend to religious liberty, in the following manner: "Last month a few poor people met together in Lincolnshire, to pray to and praise God in a friend's house: there was no preaching at all. Two neighbouring justices fined the man of the house twenty pounds. I suppose he was not worth twenty shillings. Upon this, his household goods were distrained and sold to pay the fine. He appealed to the quarter-sessions; but all the justices averred, 'The Methodists could have no relief from *the act of toleration*, because they went to Church; and that, so long as they did so, *the conventicle act* should be executed upon them.'

"Last Sunday, when one of our preachers was beginning to speak to a quiet congregation, a neighbouring justice sent a constable to seize him, though he was licensed; and would not release him till he had paid twenty pounds, telling him 'his license was good for nothing, *because he was a Churchman.*'

"Now, Sir, what can the Methodists do? They are liable to be ruined by *the conventicle act*, and they have no relief from *the act of toleration!* If this is not oppression, what is? Where then is English liberty? the liberty of Christians? yea, of every rational creature, who, as such, has a right to worship God according to his own conscience? But, waving the question of

right and wrong, what prudence is there in oppressing such a body of loyal subjects? If these good magistrates could drive them, not only out of Somersetshire, but out of England, who would be gainers thereby? Not his majesty, whom we honour and love: not his ministers, whom we love and serve for his sake. Do they wish to throw away so many thousand friends, who are now bound to them by stronger ties than that of interest? —If you will speak a word to Mr. Pitt on that head, you will oblige," &c.

Dr. Whitehead observes, "The paper from which the above is taken is only a copy; and I have some doubt whether Somersetshire be not inserted for Lincolnshire before mentioned in the same paper.* However this may be, Mr. Wesley wrote to the bishop of —— the following letter a few months before the above was written:

"My Lord,

"I am a dying man, having already one foot in the grave. Humanly speaking, I cannot long creep upon the earth, being now nearer ninety than eighty years of age. But I cannot die in peace, before I have discharged this office of Christian love to your lordship. I write without ceremony, as neither hoping nor fearing any thing from your lordship, or from any man living. And I ask, in the name and in the presence of Him, to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those that are quiet in the land? those that fear God and work righteousness? Does your lordship know what the Methodists are? That many thousands of them are zealous members of the Church of England, and strongly attached, not only to his majesty, but to his present ministry? Why should your lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas, my lord! is this a time to persecute any man for conscience sake? I beseech you, my lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe, (what is of infinitely more value,) you are a man

* No. It was in Somersetshire. Mr. Andrew Inglis was fined thus during the Bristol conference, in the year 1790. The lawyer at the head of this persecution boasted that he would drive Methodism out of Somersetshire. "Yes," said Mr. Wesley, "when he drives God out of it."

of piety. Then think, and let think.—I pray God to bless you with the choicest of his blessings.

"I am, my lord," &c.

To a prelate, in whose diocess this kind of persecution was I suppose still more violent, he wrote the following letter:

"My Lord,

"It may seem strange, that one who is not acquainted with your lordship should trouble you with a letter. But I am constrained to do it: I believe it is my duty both to God and your lordship. And I must speak plain; having nothing to hope or fear in this world, which I am on the point of leaving.

"The Methodists, in general, my lord, are members of the Church of England. They hold all her doctrines, attend her service, and partake of her sacraments. They do not willingly do harm to any one, but do what good they can to all. To encourage each other herein, they frequently spend an hour together in prayer and mutual exhortation. Permit me then to ask, *Cui bono?* '*For what reasonable end*' would your lordship drive these people out of the Church? Are they not as quiet, as inoffensive, nay, as pious as any of their neighbours? Except perhaps here and there a hairbrained man, who knows not what he is about. Do you ask, 'Who drives them out of the Church?' Your lordship does; and that in the most cruel manner; yea, and the most disingenuous manner. They desire a license to worship God after their own conscience. Your lordship refuses it; and then punishes them for not having a license! So your lordship leaves them only this alternative, 'Leave the Church, or starve.' And is it a Christian, yea, a Protestant bishop, that so persecutes his own flock? I say *persecutes:* for it is persecution, to all intents and purposes. You do not burn them indeed, but you starve them: and how small is the difference! And your lordship does this under colour of a vile, execrable law, not a whit better than that *de Hæretico comburendo!** So persecution, which is banished out of France, is again countenanced in England!

"O my lord, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for pity's sake, suffer the poor people to enjoy their religious, as well as civil

* Concerning the burning of heretics.

liberty! I am on the brink of eternity! Perhaps so is your lordship too! How soon may you also be called to give an account of your stewardship to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! May he enable both you and me to do it with joy! So prays, my lord,

"Your lordship's dutiful son and servant,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"HULL, *June* 26, 1790."

Mr. Wesley had hitherto ordained ministers only for America and Scotland. But during the period I have mentioned, being assisted by other presbyters of the Church of England, he set apart a certain number of preachers for the sacred office by the imposition of his hands and prayer, without sending them out of England. One of these he ordained after writing the above letter, and but a short time before his death; strongly advising them, at the same time, that, according to his example, they should continue united to the Established Church, so far as that work of God in which they were engaged would permit.

To avoid an extreme so very painful to him as separating from the Church, he took counsel with some of his friends, who advised that an application should be made to parliament for the repeal of the conventicle act. Several of the members of the house of commons who were convinced of his sincere attachment to the present government, and of the inexpediency of that law in the present day, were inclined to favour the application.* But his increasing infirmities prevented his bestowing that attention upon it which was needful. He would omit none of his religious duties or labours. Herein he would listen to no advice. His almost continual prayer was, "Lord, let me not live to be useless!" At every place, after giving to the society what he desired them to consider as his last advice, 'To love as brethren, fear God, and honour the king,' he invariably concluded with that verse:

Oh that without a ling'ring groan
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live!

* The question mooted above was carefully prepared, and came to issue about twenty years after, in what has been called *Lord Sidmouth's Bill.* The issue was decisive, and caused a reaction that set the question completely at rest, and obtained

In this manner he went on till the usual time of his leaving London approached. Determined not to relax, he sent his chaise and horses before him to Bristol, and took places for himself and his friend in the Bath coach. But the vigorous mind could no longer support the body. It sunk, though by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, until

The weary wheels of life stood still at last.

On Thursday the 17th of February, 1791, he preached at Lambeth. When he came home he seemed not to be well: and being asked, How he did? he said, He believed he had caught cold.

Friday the 18th. He read and wrote as usual, and preached at Chelsea in the evening. But he was obliged to stop once or twice, and to inform the people his cold so affected his voice as to prevent his speaking without those necessary pauses.

Saturday the 19th. He filled up most of his time with reading and writing, though his fever and weakness seemed evidently increasing. At dinner he desired a friend to read to him three or four chapters out of the book of Job. He rose (according to custom) early the next morning, but utterly unfit for his sabbath-day's exercise. At seven o'clock he was obliged to lie down, and slept between three and four hours. When he awoke he said, "I have not had such a comfortable sleep this fortnight past." In the afternoon he lay down again, and slept an hour or two: afterwards two of his own discourses on our Lord's *Sermon on the Mount* were read to him, and in the evening he came down to supper.

Monday the 21st. He seemed much better; and though his friends tried to dissuade him from it, would keep an engagement made some time before to dine at Twickenham. When he returned home he seemed better: and on Tuesday went on with his usual work; and preached in the evening at the chapel in the City-road.

On Wednesday he went to Leatherhead, and preached to a small company on 'Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call ye upon him, while he is near.' Here ended the ministerial labours of this man of God. On Thursday he stopped at Mr. Wolff's at Balaam. At this place he was cheerful; and seemed

for religious liberty a more solid basis. His majesty's ministers behaved on that occasion with the greatest candour and liberality.

nearly as well as usual, till Friday about breakfast time, when he grew very heavy. About eleven o'clock he returned home; and, having sat down in his room, desired to be left alone, and not to be interrupted for half an hour by any one.

When the limited time was expired some mulled wine was given him. He drank a little, and seemed sleepy; but in a few minutes threw it up, and said, "I must lie down." He accordingly was put to bed, and lay most of the day, having a quick pulse and a burning fever.

Saturday the 26th. He continued much the same; spoke but little, and if roused to answer a question, or take a little refreshment, (which was seldom more than a spoonful at a time,) he soon dosed again.

On Sunday morning he got up, took a cup of tea, and seemed much better. While sitting in his chair he looked quite cheerful, and repeated the latter part of that verse in the Scripture Hymns on 'Forsake me not, when my strength faileth:'

Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And O! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!

Soon after, in a most emphatical manner, he said, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' Some who were then present, speaking rather too much to him, he tried to exert himself, but was soon exhausted and obliged to lie down. After a while he looked up, and said, "Speak to me, I cannot speak."—On which one of the company said, "Shall we pray with you, sir?"—He earnestly replied, "Yes." And while they prayed his whole soul seemed engaged with God for an answer, and he added a hearty AMEN.

About half after two he said, "There is no need for more than what I said at Bristol. My words then were,

I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!*

* At the Bristol conference in the year 1783, Mr. Wesley was taken very ill: neither he nor his friends thought he would recover. From the nature of his complaint, he thought a spasm would probably seize his stomach and occasion sudden death. Under these views of his situation, he said to Mr. Bradford, "I have been reflecting on my past life: I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow creatures; and now, it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for

One said, "Is this the present language of your heart, and do you now feel as you then did?" He replied, "Yes." When the same person repeated

"Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
And claim the crown through Christ my own;"

and added, "'Tis enough. He, our precious Immanuel, has purchased, has promised all;" he earnestly replied, "He is all! He is all!" and then said, "I will go." Soon after to his niece Miss Wesley, who sat by his bedside, he said, "Sally, have you zeal for God now?" After this the fever was very high, and at times affected his head: but even then, though his head was subject to a temporary derangement, his heart seemed wholly engaged in his Master's work.

In the evening he got up again, and while sitting in his chair, he said, "How necessary is it for every one to be on the right foundation!

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

We must be justified by faith, and then go on to full sanctification."

He slept most of the following day, and spoke but little; yet that little testified how much his whole heart was taken up in the care of the churches, the glory of God, and the things pertaining to that kingdom to which he was hastening. Once in a low, but very distinct voice, he said, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus."

He afterwards inquired what the words were on which he preached at Hampstead a short time before. He was told they were these: 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' He replied, "That is the foundation, the only foundation: there is no other." He also repeated three or four times in the space of a few hours, 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.'

salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this:

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

The sentiment here expressed, and his reference to it in his last sickness, plainly show how steadily he had persevered in the same views of the gospel, with which he set out to preach it.

Tuesday, March 1st. After a very restless night, (though when asked whether he was in pain, he generally answered "No," and never complained through his whole illness, except once when he felt a pain in his left breast when he drew his breath,) he began singing,

All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored!
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord!
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race;
Once more to thy people return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

O! wouldst thou again be made known,
Again in the Spirit descend;
And set up in each of thine own
A kingdom that never shall end!
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey;
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to thy sway.

Here his strength failed: but after lying still awhile, he called for a pen and ink. They were brought to him: but those active fingers, which had been the blessed instruments of conveying spiritual consolation and useful instruction to thousands, could no longer perform their office. Some time after, he said, "I want to write:" but on the pen's being put into his hand, and the paper held before him, he said, "I cannot." One of the company answered, "Let me write for you, sir: tell me what you would say." "Nothing," replied he, "but that GOD IS WITH US." In the forenoon he said, "I will get up." While they were bringing his clothes, he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished all present, in these words:

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Happy the man, whose hopes rely
On Israel's God: he made the sky,
And earth and seas with all their train:
His truth for ever stands secure,
He saves th' oppress'd, he feeds the poor,
And none shall find his promise vain.

Another time, he was feebly endeavouring to speak, beginning, "Nature is —— Nature is." One that was present, added "Nearly exhausted, but you are entering into a new nature, and into the society of blessed spirits." He answered, "Certainly;" and clasped his hands together, saying, "Jesus!" the rest could not be well heard, but his lips continued moving as in fervent prayer.

When he got into his chair, he appeared to change for death; but, regardless of his dying frame, he said, with a weak voice, "Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest the tongue." He then sung

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree,—

Here his voice failed him, and after gasping for breath, he said, "Now we have done——Let us all go." He was then laid on the bed, from which he rose no more. After lying still, and sleeping a little, he desired those who were present to pray and praise. They knelt down, and the room seemed to be filled with the divine presence. A little after he said, "Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen, and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the chapel." Then, as if done with all below, he again begged they would pray and praise. Several friends that were in the house being called up, they all kneeled down to prayer, at which time his fervour of spirit was visible to every one present. But in particular parts of the prayer, his whole soul seemed to be engaged in a manner which evidently showed how ardently he longed for the full accomplishment of their united desires. And when Mr. Broadbent, who did not long survive him, was praying in a very expressive manner, that if God was about to take away their father to his eternal rest, he would be pleased to continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline, which he had long made his aged servant the means of propagating and establishing in the world; such a degree of fervour accompanied his loud amen, as was every way expressive of his soul's being engaged in the answer of the petitions.

On rising from their knees, he took hold of all their hands, and with the utmost placidness saluted them, and said, "Farewell, farewell."

A little after, a person coming in, he strove to speak, but could not. Finding they could not understand him, he paused a little, and with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, "*The best of all is, God is with us :*" and then lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart reviving words, "*The best of all is, God is with us.*"

Seeing some persons standing by his bedside, he asked, "Who are these?" and being informed who they were; Mr. Rogers said, "Sir, we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown." "It is the Lord's doing," he replied, "and marvellous in our eyes." On being told that his sister-in-law Mrs. Wesley was come, he said, "He giveth his servants rest." He thanked her, as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. On wetting his lips he said, "We thank thee, oh Lord, for these and all thy mercies: bless the Church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever!"*

At another time he said, "He causeth his servants to lie down in peace." Then pausing a little, he cried, "The clouds drop fatness!" and soon after, "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!" He then called those present to prayer: and though he was greatly exhausted, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. These exertions were however too much for his feeble frame; and most of the night following, though he often attempted to repeat the psalm before mentioned, he could only utter

I'll praise———I'll praise—

On Wednesday morning the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend, prayed with him, and the last word he was heard to articulate was, "Farewell!" A few minutes before ten, while several of his friends were kneeling around his bed; without a lingering groan, this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord.

At the desire of many friends, his corpse was placed in the New chapel, and remained there the day before his interment.†

* This was his constant thanksgiving after meals.

† Mr. Southey has repeated, after Mr. Hampson, "That he had a Bible in one hand, and a white handkerchief in the other; and the old clerical cap on his head." As I was an eyewitness, I may state that there is no truth at all in this account. He had no clerical cap, old or new, in his possession; and his friends had too much sense to put any thing into the hands of a corpse.

His face during that time had the trace of a heavenly smile upon it, and a beauty which was admired by all that saw it. The crowds which came to see him, while he lay in his coffin, were so great, that his friends, apprehensive of a tumult if he was interred at the usual time, determined to bury him, contrary to their first resolution, between five and six in the morning; of which no notice was given till late the preceding evening; notwithstanding which, the intelligence had so far transpired, that some hundreds attended at that early hour. These, with many tears, saw his dear remains deposited in the vault which he had some years before prepared for himself, and for those itinerant preachers who should die in London. From those whom he loved in life he chose not to be divided in death.

The funeral service was read by the late Rev. Mr. Richardson, who had served him as a son in the gospel for nearly thirty years, and who now lies with him in the same vault. When Mr. Richardson came to that part of the service, "For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother," &c., he substituted, with the most tender emphasis, the epithet "Father" instead of "Brother;" which had so powerful an effect on the congregation, that from silent tears they seemed universally to burst out into loud weeping.

The inscription on the coffin was,

JOHANNES WESLEY, A. M.
Olim. Soc. Coll. Lin. Oxon.
Ob. 2 do. die Martii, 1791.
An. Æt. 88.*

* John Wesley, Master of Arts, formerly Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, died on the 2d day of March, 1791, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

The following was the inscription on his tomb:

To the Memory of
THE VENERABLE JOHN WESLEY, A. M
Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.
This great light arose,
(By the singular providence of God,)
To enlighten these nations,
And to revive, enforce, and defend,
The pure apostolical doctrines and practices of the
primitive church:
Which he continued to do, by his writings and his labours,
For more than half a century:
And, to his inexpressible joy,
Not only beheld their influence extending,
And their efficacy witnessed
In the hearts and lives of many thousands,
As well in the Western World as in these kingdoms:
But also, far above all human power or expectation, lived to see provision
made, by the singular grace of God,
For their continuance and establishment,
To the joy of future generations!
Reader, if thou art constrained to bless the instrument,
Give God the glory!
After having languished a few days, he at length finished his course
and his life together;
Gloriously triumphing over death,
March 2, An. Dom. 1791,
In the eighty-eighth year of his age.

The following is a copy of his last Will and Testament:

"In the name of God, Amen!

"I, JOHN WESLEY, Clerk, some time Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, revoking all others, appoint this to be my last Will and Testament.

"I give all my books now on sale, and the copies of them, (only subject to a rent charge of 85*l.** a year, to the widow and children of my brother,) to my faithful friends, John Horton, merchant; George Wolff, merchant; and William Marriott,

* Two thousand pounds had been secured to Mr. Charles Wesley on his marriage, to which the stock of books, which was all the property that Mr. John Wesley possessed, was made liable, and from which one hundred pounds a year was paid as the interest. Mr. Wesley determined to pay off the principal, and three hundred pounds were actually paid at the time of his death. That Mrs. Wesley and her family might not suffer any loss, or be at any uncertainty, the conference being happily united in the work, resolved to act according to Mr. Wesley's intention. They accordingly borrowed the remaining seventeen hundred pounds, and paid it to Mrs. Wesley, in the presence of Mr. Charles Wesley's executors.

stock-broker, all of London, in trust for the general fund of the Methodist conference in carrying on the work of God by itinerant preachers;* on condition that they permit the following committee, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickenson, Thomas Rankin, George Whitfield, and the London assistant for the time being, still to superintend the printing press, and to employ Hannah Paramore and George Paramore as heretofore, unless four of the committee judge a change to be needful.

"I give the books, furniture, and whatever else belongs to me in the three houses at Kingswood, in trust to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, and Henry Moore, to be still employed in teaching and maintaining the children of poor travelling preachers.

"I give to Thomas Coke, Dr. John Whitehead, and Henry Moore, all the books which are in my study and bedchamber at London, and in my studies elsewhere, in trust for the use of the preachers who shall labour there from time to time.

"I give the coins, and whatever else is found in the drawer of my bureau at London, to my dear granddaughters Mary and Jane Smith.

* Above a year and a half after the making of this will, Mr. Wesley executed a deed, in which he appointed seven gentlemen, viz. Dr. Thomas Coke, and Messrs. Alexander Mather, Peard Dickenson, John Valton, James Rogers, Joseph Taylor, and Adam Clarke, trustees for all his books, pamphlets, and copy-right, for carrying on the work of God by itinerant preachers, according to the enrolled deed, which we have already mentioned. But Dr. Coke being in America at the time of Mr. Wesley's death, the deed was suffered to lie dormant till his return. The three executors then took the advice of two of the most eminent counsellors in the kingdom, who informed them that the deed was of a testamentary nature, and therefore superseded the will with respect to the books, &c. The deed was then presented to the judge of the prerogative court of Canterbury, who received it as the third codicil of Mr. Wesley's will: on which the three executors delivered up their general probate, and received a new one limited to those particulars which were not mentioned in the deed. At the same time a probate was granted by the court to the seven trustees, constituting them executors for all the books, pamphlets, and copy-right, of which Mr. Wesley died possessed; and empowering them to pay all his debts and legacies. This testamentary deed has been faithfully executed.—Dr. Whitehead has, however, indulged himself on this occasion, in his usual strain of calumny. He strives to represent this deed as being imposed on Mr. Wesley during the days of his weakness: he does not, however, bring forward any evidence. The fact is, Mr. Wesley, fearing lest any of his heirs at law should possess themselves of that property which he considered as sacred to God and his work, strengthened his will by this additional instrument. He accordingly ordered the deed to be prepared immediately after the conference at Bristol, in the year 1790, and upon his coming to London in the month of October following, he immediately executed it.

"I give all my manuscripts to Thomas Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burnt or published as they see good.

"I give whatever money remains in my bureau and pockets at my decease, to be equally divided between Thomas Briscoe, William Collins, John Easton, and Isaac Brown.

"I desire my gowns, cassocks, sashes, and bands, may remain at the chapel for the use of the clergymen attending there.

"I desire the London assistant for the time being to divide the rest of my wearing apparel between those four of the travelling preachers that want it most; only my pelisse I give to the Rev. Mr. Creighton; my watch to my friend Joseph Bradford; my gold seal to Eliz. Ritchie.

"I give my chaise and horses to James Ward and Charles Wheeler, in trust, to be sold, and the money to be divided, one half to Hannah Abbott, and the other to the poor members of the Select society.

"Out of the first money which arises from the sale of books, I bequeath to my dear sister Martha Hall (if alive) 40*l.*, to Mr. Creighton, aforesaid, 40*l.*, and to the Rev. Mr. Heath 60*l.*

"And whereas I am empowered by a late deed to name the persons who are to preach in the New chapel at London, (the clergymen for a continuance,) and by another deed to name a committee for appointing preachers in the New chapel at Bath, I do hereby appoint John Richardson, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickenson, Clerks, Alexander Mather, William Thompson, Henry Moore, Andrew Blair, John Valton, Joseph Bradford, James Rogers, and William Myles, to preach in the New chapel at London, and to be the committee for appointing preachers in the New chapel at Bath.

"I likewise appoint Henry Brooke, painter, Arthur Keen, gent., and Wm. Whitestone, stationer, all of Dublin, to receive the annuity of 5*l.* (English) left to Kingswood school by the late Roger Shiel, Esq.

"I give 6*l.* to be divided among the six poor men, named by the assistant, who shall carry my body to the grave; for I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom. I solemnly adjure my executors in the name of God, punctually to observe this.

"Lastly, I give to each of those travelling preachers who

shall remain in the connexion six months after my decease, as a little token of my love, the eight volumes of sermons.

"I appoint John Horton, George Wolff, and William Marriott, aforesaid, to be executors of this my last Will and Testament, for which trouble they will receive no recompense till the resurrection of the just.

"Witness my hand and seal, the 20th day of February, 1789.

"JOHN WESLEY." (seal.)

"Signed, sealed, and delivered, by the said Testator as for his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us

"WILLIAM CLULOW,

"ELIZABETH CLULOW."

"Should there be any part of my personal estate undisposed of by this my Will, I give the same unto my two nieces E. Ellison, and S. Collet, equally.

"JOHN WESLEY."

"WILLIAM CLULOW,

"ELIZABETH CLULOW."

"Feb. 25, 1789.

"I give my types, printing presses, and every thing pertaining thereto, to Mr. Thomas Rankin, and Mr. George Whitfield, in trust, FOR THE USE OF THE CONFERENCE.

"JOHN WESLEY."

CHAPTER IV.

A REVIEW OF MR. WESLEY'S LABOURS AS A WRITER, AND AS A MINISTER OF CHRIST—TESTIMONIES OF EMINENT MEN CONCERNING HIM—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE FELLOWSHIP AND DISCIPLINE ESTABLISHED IN THE SOCIETIES.

THOSE who have hitherto considered Mr. Wesley as a writer, have fallen under great mistakes. There was a unity in his character, of which they were either totally ignorant, or not sufficiently sensible; and without this it was not possible to do him justice. In the year 1725, he tells us he made a resolution to dedicate all his life to God,—*all his thoughts, words, and actions;* being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that *every part* of his life, not *some* only, must either be a sacrifice to God or to himself, that is, in effect, to the devil.

It is in this light his writings as well as all his labours are to be viewed. His design in writing and in preaching was the same, viz., that he might be faithful to every talent committed to him, and that all might issue in bringing glory to God, and peace and good will to men. But he was careful never to suffer this subordinate talent to interfere with his higher call to 'preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.' 'Wo unto me if I preach not the gospel,' seemed to be always before him. He knew this was especially God's ordinance; and he received the apostle's word to Timothy, 'not in word only but in power.'—'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach the word—be instant in season, out of season; convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and teaching.'

Mr. Wesley's writings, therefore, as they were subordinate to his ministerial duties, so they were in perfect unison with them; enforcing and confirming the same divine truths; and as it was thus his one aim to do all the good he could, it would have been strange if, in a life of eighty-eight years, he had not produced many books. The number, great and small, amounts to some hundreds.

We are assured in the Holy Scriptures, that 'the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' This promise, for such it is according to the gospel covenant, was fulfilled in Mr. Wesley. He began his religious course, as all sincere persons do who are *convinced of sin*, with placing the Holy Law of God before him, and striving to bend his spirit to its sacred precepts; resolving even to risk 'the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' His brother Samuel well describes him in his poetical epistle of April 20, 1732,* to Mr. C. Wesley.

> Does John seem bent beyond his strength to go,
> To his frail carcass literally foe?
> Lavish of health, as if in haste to die,
> And shorten time, t'ensure eternity?

His first publication, of any note, was his edition of Kempis, elegantly printed in octavo, in the year 1735, while he was yet at Oxford, by his friend Mr. C. Rivington, already noted. He was dissatisfied with Dean Stanhope's translation, and determined to give a full view of the self-denying purity of his favourite guide. He methodized this admirable treatise of "The Imitation of Jesus Christ," as he did the Holy Scriptures, when, as he informs us, he "began not only to read, but to *study* the Bible." This edition of Kempis now lies before me, and clearly shows not only his great attention to the truths which it contains, but his admirable skill in putting into order, and thus illustrating, its high and invaluable sentiments. This book was his constant companion; and when his mind at all revolted at the strait path, he seemed to say, in the words of his author, "Thou dust, learn to obey." I need not, however, inform my readers, that in the increase of light which the Lord gave him, he, like the great apostle, 'became dead to the law;' his self-confidence being utterly 'slain by the commandment.' The faith which brings in a new creation was then placed before him, and he was not disobedient to the heavenly calling. 'The righteousness of the law was fulfilled in him, walking, not after the flesh, but after the spirit, by faith in Christ Jesus.'

His first sermon, preached on January 1, 1733, before the university, on *the circumcision of the heart*, (Rom. ii, 29,) when he was emerging into the light of the gospel, is a most admirable

* See vol. i, page 158.

picture of the state of his own mind. It exhibits the perfection of the Christian character, which he was then ardently pursuing. But it was deficient respecting the inward life, peace, and power, of which *true faith* is the root. Of this defect he was unconscious in that day: he could not attain to it till he claimed it as *the gift of God;* and this could not be while *he sought it not by faith,* as a *condemned* sinner, through the infinitely perfect atonement of the Son of God.

His second and third sermons, preached before the university on June 18, 1738, and on July 25, 1741, though diversified in the structure, have the same design. They exhibit the *new creature,* with the simple and only way of attaining that blessed state—*by faith.* The learned assembly, who had listened with some complacency to the fair though somewhat rigid portrait of a Christian, in his first discourse, delivered while he resided among them, were amazed at 'the new and living way' of thus 'entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' They felt that they were considered by the preacher as *sinners,* and, as such, condemned men. Their character as learned and wise, they saw, if this were true, availed them nothing before God, but rather increased their guilt, while they shrunk from the powerful word that showed them—*all was theirs in Christ Jesus.*

His fourth discourse was preached, as he has informed us,* in order to *deliver his soul,* as he could not expect to have these opportunities continued to him. He again placed before them the simple life divine, which should in time become the religion of the world: while he broke in pieces all the proud pretences of fallen man, however dignified. It is an admirable illustration of the apostle's word, 2 Cor. x, 4, 5. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God; to the pulling down of strong holds, destroying reasonings, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringeth every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'

After having for some years declared the same truths in every part of the land, he saw the necessity of composing a *form of sound words,* comprising the essential truths of the gospel, from which all men might know the doctrines which he taught, and which might remain with his associates in the work, as a concise, but clear and full "body of divinity," in keeping of which they

* See page 27.

could not greatly err: while the people who were raised up by their labours might, if they should continue *one body, hear the same truths, and mind the same things.*

After thinking much on this subject, he retired to Lewisham, to the house of his friend Mr. Blackwell, already mentioned, and taking with him, as he informed me, only the Holy Scriptures in the original tongues, he composed, at several visits, what is well known among us as "The four volumes of Sermons," those preached before the university being the first in order.

Of his design in composing these discourses, as well as of his method of investigating truth in general, he has given us the following striking account in his preface:

"I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture. Nothing appears here in an elaborate, elegant, or rhetorical dress. I mention this, that curious readers may spare themselves the labour of seeking for what they will not find.

"My design is, in some sense, to forget all that I have ever read in my life. I mean to speak, in the general, as if I had never read one author ancient or modern, (always excepting the inspired.) I am persuaded that on the one hand this may be a means of enabling me more clearly to express the sentiments of my heart, while I simply follow the chain of my own thoughts, without entangling myself with those of other men: and that on the other, I shall come with fewer weights upon my mind, with less of prejudice and prepossession, either to search for myself, or to deliver to others, the naked truths of the gospel.

"To candid reasonable men I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath

written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri.** Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. 'Lord, is it not thy word, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God? Thou givest liberally and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, If any man be willing to do thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do: let me know thy will.' I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God: and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

After such an account as this, to consider his sermons according to the usual mode of criticism, would be to forget, or be insensible to, his whole character, as a man who had been truly sent of God to teach the way of God. They fully answer the expectation, which the pious and sensible reader is led to form by this exordium. His first four volumes contain the substance of what he usually declared in the pulpit. He designed by them to give a view of what St. Paul calls (την αναλογιαν της πιστεως) *the analogy of faith;* viz., the strong connexion and harmony between those grand fundamental doctrines, *original sin, justification by faith in the divine atonement of the Son of God, the new birth,* inward and outward *holiness.* They are written with great energy, and as much as possible, in the very words of the inspired writers. He was fully of Luther's mind, who declared, that divinity was nothing else than a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost.

His other sermons were written occasionally. The last four volumes (which he wrote for his magazine) have been much admired, even by those who were not much disposed to relish his doctrines in general. They certainly contain abundance of the most necessary and interesting information; and are written,

* A man of one book.

not only with his usual strength, but with more than usual elegance. Two of the last sermons which he wrote (the latter of which he finished about six weeks before his death) are inferior to nothing he ever composed, if to any thing in the English language. The subjects were remarkably striking. The former was from Psalms lxxiii, 20: 'Even like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city.' The latter from Hebrews xi, 1: 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen.' In this last discourse he has given his thoughts on the separate state, the state of souls from death to the resurrection. The thoughts are deep and high; yet rational and Scriptural; worthy of one, who, standing on the verge of time, looked forward into that eternity which he had long and earnestly contemplated.

> Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
> Who stand upon the threshold of the new.

Yet the whole is considered with that diffidence which becomes an embodied spirit. How deep and sacred is the subject!

> Sacred how high, and deep how low,
> He knew not here, but died to know!

His Appeals ("Apologies" they would have been called in the ancient church) answer the idea, which the term *masterly production* usually gives us: we have seen the strong opinion expressed by Dr. Doddridge respecting them.* They were written in the fulness of his heart; while beholding 'the world lying in the wicked one, he wept over it.' We could almost venture to assert, that no unprejudiced person can read them without feeling their force and acknowledging their justness. It is certain, they have convinced many persons who were deeply prejudiced; and those too of considerable learning. It has been remarked, that those who truly preach the gospel, do it with a flaming tongue. I am ready to make a similar remark respecting these Appeals: the flame, the power, and yet the sobriety of love, are highly manifest in them; and I cannot but earnestly recommend them to all, who desire to know 'what spirit he was of' while contending against almost the whole world; and whether it really was for the truth of God he so contended.

In the year 1749 he began to select and abridge the works of the wisest and most pious men that have lived since the days

* See page 84.

of the apostles, in order to form a Christian library.* He began with the Epistles and other writings of the apostolic fathers, Ignatius, Polycarp, Clemens Romanus, &c. He waded through a prodigious number of books on practical and experimental religion, in regular succession, according to the times when they were written; and, at length, completed a work of fifty volumes. When we consider, that he reduced many folios and quartos to a pocket volume each; that he did this in the midst of labour, which many would think in itself sufficient to wear out the most robust of mankind; that he abridged some of those volumes on horseback, and others at inns or houses, where he stayed but a few days or hours; how astonishing will his industry and perseverance appear!

He willingly embraced any toil which might promote the wisdom or happiness of mankind. With this view, he compiled a "System of Natural Philosophy," in five volumes, comprising therein what is known with any certainty, or is likely to profit those who have pleasure in the works of God; who consider,

> These, as they change, Almighty Father! these
> Are but the varied God!

And his labour was not lost. Even the learned have admired this performance, as a useful and edifying compendium. Mr. Wesley received letters highly expressive of satisfaction from some of the first names in Oxford, to whom he had presented it. Considered as an illustration, for general use, of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, it is excellent; and the moral reflections it contains are as much distinguished by their justness and elegance as by their utility. It is, upon the whole, the most useful *Christian* compendium of philosophy in the English language.

From the same motive he compiled his historical works. He had not time to be original in those productions. He therefore chose the best he could find, civil and ecclesiastical; and abridged, added, or altered, as he believed the truth required, and to suit the convenience of the purchaser; his chief aim being to spread religious and useful knowledge among the poor or middling class of men.

His controversial pieces he wrote as need required. First, to preserve those who were in danger of being seduced from

* See page 85

the plain religion of the Bible; and, secondly, if possible, to recover those who had fallen into the snare. The chief of these is his Treatise on Original Sin, in answer to Dr. Taylor, of Norwich; the most subtle, refined, plausible Arian and Pelagian of the age in which he lived; and whose writings gained the more credit, as he was a man of good moral character and sober habits. Mr. Wesley looked upon the doctor's system, to use his own words, as "*a blow at the root of the whole of Christianity.*" He felt much for the doctor, and hoped that he might be induced to review the awful subject. But on being informed that "Dr. Taylor declined replying to Mr. Wesley," he wrote to him as follows:

"*Hartlepool, July* 3, 1759.

"REVEREND SIR,

"I esteem you, as a person of uncommon sense and learning; but your doctrine I cannot esteem: and, some time since, I believed it to be my duty to speak my sentiments at large concerning your doctrine of *original sin.* When Mr. Newton mentioned this, and asked whether you designed to answer, you said 'You thought not; for it would only be *a personal controversy* between John Wesley and John Taylor.'—How gladly, if I durst, would I accept of this discharge! But, certainly, it is a controversy of the highest importance; nay, of all those things that concern our eternal peace. It is *Christianity?*—or *Heathenism?* For, take away the Scriptural doctrine of redemption, justification, and the new birth, the beginning of sanctification; or, which amounts to the same, explain them as you do,—and in what is Christianity better than Heathenism? Wherein, (save in rectifying some of our *notions,*) has the religion of St. Paul any pre-eminence over that of Socrates or Epictetus? The point is, therefore, are those things that have been believed for so many ages, throughout the Christian world, real, solid truths, or monkish dreams and vain imaginations?

"Either you or I mistake the whole of Christianity from the beginning to the end! Either my scheme or yours is as contrary to the Scriptural as the Koran is. Is it mine or yours? Yours has gone through all England, and made numerous converts. I attack it from end to end: let all England judge whether it can be defended or not.

"Earnestly praying that God may give you and me a right understanding in all things,

"I am, reverend sir,

"Your servant, for Christ's sake,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The doctor, however, persisted in his resolution to be silent. It has been said that he always spoke of Mr. Wesley with the highest respect; and that when he first heard of his intention he cried out, "What! is that servant of God going to write against *me?*" Dr. Taylor had spent the greatest part of his life in composing this treatise, and in revising, correcting, and strengthening it against all objections. His own comforts, at more than eighty years old, were thus interwoven with his favourite system; and, with respect to others, he was willing, perhaps, that they should choose for themselves, and take their chance.

"What is truth?" said Pilate, and retired;
Dissolved the court, and mingled with the throng!'

Mr. Wesley, however, being more sure of his creed than the learned doctor seemed to be of his system, which he had brought forth with such persevering labour, continued to bear a faithful testimony against this *deceivableness of unrighteousness*. In the preface to his Reply,* he observes, "This is not a question which may be safely determined either way. On the contrary, it may be doubted whether the scheme before us be not far more dangerous than open Deism itself. It does not shock us like barefaced infidelity: we feel no pain, and suspect no evil, while it steals 'like water into our bowels, and like oil into our bones.' One who would be on his guard in reading the works of Dr. Middleton, [who yet would fain have passed for a Christian!] or Lord Bolingbroke, is quite open and unguarded in reading the smooth decent writings of Dr. Taylor.

"I said, 'than *open* Deism.' For I cannot look upon this scheme as any other than *old* Deism in a new dress; seeing it saps the foundation of all revealed religion, whether Jewish or Christian. There is, according to this, no need of Christianity; for 'the whole have no need of a physician;' and the Christian religion speaks of nothing else, but the great *Physician* of our souls. But what need of this if we are in perfect health? If we

* His works in thirty-two volumes, vol. xxi.

are not sick why should we seek *a medicine to heal our sickness?* If, therefore, we take away this foundation, that man is by nature foolish and sinful, 'fallen short of the glorious image of God,' in which we were created, the Christian system falls at once: nor will it deserve so honourable an appellation as that of 'a cunningly-devised fable.'"*

This wretched system has hurt many, and not a few who were men of strong understanding and considerable learning. The late Dr. Robertson having published the Chevalier Ramsay's 'Principles of Religion,' with notes, Mr. Wesley wrote to him in the year 1753, and, quoting the chevalier's bold declaration, (agreeable to Dr. Taylor's system,) "that the frivolous and blasphemous notions of those who represent the expiatory sacrifice of Christ as destined to appease divine justice, and divert divine vengeance, arise from deplorable ignorance,"—he replies, "'These frivolous and blasphemous notions' do I receive as the precious truths of God; and so deplorable is my ignorance, that I verily believe all who deny them 'deny the Lord that bought them.'".

That any who have known the 'truth in power' should be captivated by this system, is still more surprising and deplorable. It is natural that such should attempt to mend it; but it cannot be. The foundation is wrong, and no skill can support the fabrick. He that runs into it is not safe. It is of *the old serpent;* and only 'the weaned child' can, with any safety, 'put his hand on the hole of the cockatrice's den!' We should warn all others that their life is at stake. Those who, like Mr. Wesley, are well grounded in what St. Paul calls 'the foolishness of God,' will smile at, or weep over, the imposing wisdom of the learned doctor.

The glorious liberty of the children of God, (liberty from the guilt and power of sin, and from tormenting fear,) is attended with a bondage which the natural man knows not of, and a yoke which Antinomians will not take upon them. Christ's true servants 'are under the law to Christ;' and while the natural man, and the Antinomian professor, maintain their liberty to do all that their various talents, real or imaginary, may prompt or enable

* A true minister of Jesus Christ lives with that fallen wretched state of man ever before his eyes; and hence the language of his heart is, like the great apostle's, 'This one thing I do!' If he should fall from this true sense of his high calling, we ought not to wonder if he should take up with any other that may offer.

them to do; the Christian fears, hesitates, and must be satisfied that it is his duty to oppose error, as well as propagate truth. Even then he will fear lest 'the weapons of his warfare' should be in any wise 'carnal;' in which case, the contest will not be 'the good fight of faith,' nor will it have the blessing of Him whose religion is *truth* and *love*. Mr. Wesley felt all this exquisitely when he first became a controversialist. The preface to his first work of this kind shows a tenderness of spirit which is truly admirable. A few years after he had in his Journals stated those doctrines of the Bible and of the Church of England, that first made such a noise, and afterward had such a mighty influence, a Mr. Tucker attacked them in a pamphlet entitled "*A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism.*" Mr. Wesley thought it his duty to oppose the erroneous statements in this publication, and thus prefaces his reply:*

"I have often wrote on *controverted points* before, but not with an eye to any particular person; so that this is the first time that I have appeared in *controversy*, properly so called. Indeed I have not wanted occasion to do it before; particularly when, after many stabs in the dark, I was publicly attacked, not by an open enemy, but 'by my own familiar friend.' But I could not answer *him*. I could only cover my face and say, Και συ, εν εκεινων: Και συ, τεκνον?†

"I now tread an untried path with fear and trembling; fear, not of my adversary, but of myself. I fear my own spirit, lest I fall, 'where many mightier have been slain.' I never knew one (or but one) man write controversy with what I thought a right spirit. Every disputant seems to think (as every soldier) that he may hurt his opponent as much as he can; nay, that he ought *to do his worst* to him, or he cannot *make the best* of his own cause.

"But ought these things to be so? (I speak on the Christian scheme.) Ought we not 'to love our neighbour as ourselves!' And does a man cease to be our neighbour because he is of a different opinion? nay, and declares himself so to be? Ought we not, for all this, to 'do to him as we would he should do to us?' But, do we ourselves love to be exposed, or *set in the worst light?* Would we willingly be treated with contempt?

* His works in thirty-two volumes, vol. xvi.

† *Art thou also among them? Art thou, my son?* The allusion is to Cæsar's words when he saw Brutus raise his hand against him.

And yet who scruples it? Who does not hit every blot he can, however foreign to the merits of the cause? Who shows that he loves his brother, only less than the truth?

"I have made a little faint essay towards this. I have a brother who is as my own soul. My desire is, in every word I say, to look upon Mr. Tucker as in his place, and to speak no tittle concerning the one in any other spirit than I would speak concerning the other. If I have spoken any thing in another spirit, I pray God it may not be laid to my charge, and that it may not condemn me in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest!"—The whole tract is written in this spirit. The truth is maintained in love. It was this spirit, we may well believe, that, as one cause, induced Dr. Taylor not to reply to an opponent, whose life and labours he well knew,—who had the whole weight of Holy Scripture on his side, and who enforced its sacred truths in the same spirit in which they were written.

In the *Reverend* Dr. Conyers Middleton he had a very different opponent.* He took but little notice of the doctor's flippant remarks on, what he called, the Methodistical miracles: but, when he essayed his great power to sap the foundations of that religion which he had bound himself, by every sacred obligation, to maintain and enforce, Mr. Wesley ceased, comparatively, from his great labours for *nearly twenty days*, (as he informs us,) and in that time produced a reply to the doctor's ponderous volume against the miracles of the Primitive Church. There were but few men, even of those who knew Mr. Wesley, that could imagine that so many months, as the days he has mentioned, would suffice to wade through the fathers of the three first centuries, and produce such a triumphant refutation!

It has been said of Hume, that he could not bear to hear the name of Doctor Beattie mentioned; so completely did the doctor's *Essay on Truth* expose the sophisms of the infidel, evidently showing that they sapped the foundations of all knowledge,

* His works in thirty-two volumes, vol. xviii.—In the Monthly Magazine for May, 1804, there is a letter from Dr. Middleton to Lord Harvey, communicated by his lordship's brother to the Rev. William Talbot, rector of Kingston, Warwickshire. In that letter Dr. Middleton says, "It is my misfortune to have had so early a taste for Pagan science, as to make me very squeamish in my Christian studies."—This squeamishness did not, however, hinder his undertaking the Christian ministry; but not savouring the truths which he was bound to teach, we find the squeamishness issue in aversion and infidelity.

human and divine. The same shameful defeat he suffered from Dr. Campbell, in his reply concerning the authenticity of miracles. Mr. Wesley had harder work than either of these learned men. Dr. Middleton strove to save appearances,—to keep on the armour of the church. But as Homer informs us concerning Patroclus, though the borrowed armour might serve to cover the imposture, and affright men like himself, it could not withstand the assault of Apollo. Mr. Wesley's armour was 'girt about him with truth.' With what ease, with what lively wit, with what deep research, with what cogent arguments, with what exact quotations from the venerable writers of those early days, he essayed that insolent publication, is known to those who have read his reply, with a mind, in any good degree, equal to the subject.

In one point the doctor must have been exceedingly mortified, viz., Mr. Wesley's exposure of his ignorance of the Greek language. In one of the doctor's quotations from Justin Martyr, this ignorance was so apparent, that the GRÆCIAN (as Mr. Wesley used to be called at the university) could no longer contain. "In very deed, sir," says he, "I am sometimes inclined to suspect, (notwithstanding the learned quotations which adorn your margin,) that you are yourself related to certain ancient fathers, who used to say, *Græcum est: non potest legi.** You lay me under an almost invincible temptation to think so upon the present occasion. For what could induce you, if you knew what the writer said, to place at the bottom of your page a passage which so clearly confutes your whole argument?"—But this *learned* doctor also took refuge in silence.

His letter to Dr. Gibson, bishop of London, occasioned by his lordship's *Charge to his Clergy*, is an admirable mixture of true respect for the bishop's office and character, and of the indignation of truth when assailed with calumny; and which was the less to be excused, as he had explained himself fully to the bishop in several conversations. It had, by every account, a great effect on that venerable prelate, so that a vulgar report got abroad that the bishop of London was turned Methodist! It is certain he wrote no more against Mr. Wesley.

As Bishop Warburton's errors in divinity have been so fully exposed, both while he lived, and since his decease, I need not

* It is Greek: it cannot be read.

say much respecting Mr. Wesley's controversy with that eminent man.* True to his principles, he does not forget, that he is writing to a dignitary of the church; though, alas! the bishop seems totally to forget that he is writing to a scholar and a gentleman. Comparing Mr. Wesley with the first Christian preachers, he breaks out, "This paltry mimic!" To this Mr. Wesley only replies, "*Bona verba!* [*Good words!*] Surely, a writer should *reverence himself*, how much soever he may *despise* his opponent." In his reply to the bishop's tract, *On the office and operations of the Holy Spirit*, Mr. Wesley clearly shows, that the bishop's statements are totally contrary to the Bible; to the fathers of the Primitive Church, and of the Church of England; and to the doctrines and offices of that church, as by law established.

Of his reply to Bishop Lavington's ribaldry, in his *Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists compared*,† little need be said. The bishop's pamphlet was anonymous, and Mr. Wesley was, therefore, more at liberty in his answer. His lively wit and keen logic is admirably used against his facetious opponent; concerning whom, he was obliged to say, "Wit, not truth, is your object." The Lord, who had taught him to write, even to his enemies, in love, also taught him 'to answer a fool according to his folly.' I shall have occasion to mention the bishop and his writings in another place.

Mr. Wesley possessed a remarkable talent for *extracting* the works of other writers, so as to bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. Many publications have been thus rendered truly edifying, that were either tedious or dangerous in their original form. The practical works of Mr. Law, by being thus purged, formed a most useful auxiliary to Mr. Wesley's system of pure religion. The controversies also of that great man, with the formalists or sceptics of his day, Trap, Warburton, Woolaston, &c., became, under Mr. Wesley's hand, most clear and powerful defences of revealed religion. Some of the most valuable tracts in his works (thirty-two volumes) are extracts from the best writers of that day. A few years before his death, he thus extracted *Hook's Roman History*. This work now remains in his library a proof of his skill in that most useful mode of composition.

Mr. Wesley, however, took care not to injure any author by

* His works, vol. xviii. † Ibid. vol. xvi.

thus extracting his works. They were public property before he thus used them. The Rev. Mr. Jones, in his memoirs of the late pious and excellent Dr. Horne, has indeed charged Mr. Wesley with selling a work of his: I suppose he means his tract on the Trinity. But this is a mistake. Mr. Wesley recommended that tract, because he approved of it; but he never reprinted or sold it in any form. Mr. Charles Wesley composed some hymns on the Trinity, in which he made use of some texts of Scripture quoted by Mr. Jones in the work above mentioned: but surely this was not reprinting his pamphlet in any sense whatever. It is painful to see, in so respectable a writer as Mr. Jones, a sourness of temper and a disposition to find fault, every now and then break out, in spite of all his endeavours to appear candid and liberal.

Many of those who wrote against Mr. Wesley were far from being respectable; and some of them were destitute either of ability or information. His friends regretted that he would condescend to bestow an answer upon them. But though these writers knew neither the man they vilified, nor the subject they treated, yet they generally made a fierce attack, however clumsy, on some part of what he esteemed *the truth of God.* To this they were indebted for an answer. And many who never saw the publications of these gentlemen, have been edified by his replies; the truth appearing to them in a still stronger light than ever before.

It was in those controversial pieces that his consummate skill in argument appeared with such advantage. He needed not to complain, concerning any of his opponents,

Quo teneam vultum mutantem Protea nodo:*

He could bind the subtlest of them. He perceived in a moment when they departed from the question, shifted the terms, or used any fallacy. And, as he was attacked from every quarter, there is scarce any point of divinity which he has not illustrated and confirmed in those occasional publications. I cannot but strongly recommend these writings to all who would know the truths which he taught, and especially to my younger brethren in the ministry. I cannot see how they can so accurately state or defend the doctrines which they are bound to support, if they are not well grounded in these interesting and edifying controversies.

* How shall I hold one who is continually changing his shape?

His Notes on the New Testament I have already mentioned, as being composed during his illness in the year 1753, and chiefly during his confinement at the Hot Wells near Bristol. As he avows in his preface that he took Bengelius for his model, we cannot be surprised that most of his notes are concisely explanatory. Those who have read the Gnomon of Bengelius need not be informed, with what a degree of abhorrence that learned man speaks of long comments, as tending to draw off the reader's attention from the Scripture itself; or as leading him to magnify some parts of it to the neglect or lightly esteeming of other parts, equally given by the Divine Author for our profit. "We should rather," he observes, "make easy channels for the *water of life*, than desire to raise a land-flood from our broken cisterns." How exactly did these two great men agree in sentiment!

Agreeably to this, Mr. Wesley observes, in his preface, "I have endeavoured to make the Notes as short as possible, that the *comment* may not obscure or swallow up the *text;* and as plain as possible in pursuance of my main design, to assist the unlearned reader. For this reason I have studiously avoided not only all curious and critical inquiries, but all such methods of reasoning and modes of expression as people in common life are unacquainted with: for the same reason, as I rather endeavour to *obviate* than to propose and answer *objections*, so I purposely decline going deep into many difficulties, lest I should leave the ordinary reader behind me."—He had another reason for writing thus plainly: as he intended this commentary, in connexion with his four volumes of sermons, already noted, to form a body of divinity, that his associates and successors in the work of God should *speak*, and the people *hear*, the same truths; so, as he informed me, he also took care, respecting these difficulties, not to bind any man's conscience, where God has not bound it.*

* Some of these difficult questions are important, and have long troubled mankind. Of the *divine predestination* (Romans viii, 29, 30,) the comment is sober and perspicuous.—On *personal election* to eternal life (Peter i, 1, 2,) the statement is short and clear; and the objections to the doctrine, in the *absolute* sense, are given in a clear summary. The curious question of Christ's descent into HELL, is treated with marked sobriety. (Acts ii, 27.) 'Thou shalt not leave my soul in hades'—(the original word;) "that is, in *the invisible world.* But it does not appear that ever our Lord went into HELL. His soul, when it was separated from the body, did not go thither, but to PARADISE. (Luke xxiii, 43.) The meaning is, Thou wilt not leave my soul in

Speaking of this commentary, on another occasion, he observed, "I do not write to save people the trouble of *thinking*, but to *help* them to think." He knew that *such* a way of reading only could be truly edifying. In order to this, "I have," said he, "divided the text all along (though marking the chapters and verses in the common way) according to the matter it contains, making a larger or a smaller pause, just as the sense requires. And even this is such a help in many places, as one who has not tried it can scarcely conceive."

In order more fully to help the reader to *think*, he constantly marked the words in the commentary where the leading thoughts occur, with capitals, (without any regard to the punctuation,) and thus gave the reader a clue to profitable meditation. But, alas! in the editions of this invaluable work, since his death, *both* these helps have disappeared. When I compare these editions with his own, now lying before me, printed in 1757, I can hardly look upon them as the same work! Nor can I derive any thing like the same profit from them. I say, this *invaluable* work; for such it will be found by those who simply desire to know the mind of God. I was assured by a friend, of considerable learning, (more than forty years ago,) that when one of the most eminent and pious doctors of the Church of England saw it, he declared—"There is nothing like it in the world."

Some time after the publication of his New Testament, he was strongly solicited to write a comment on the Old Testament also. But his various labours rendered this impossible. He at length so far complied with importunity, as to select and abridge the comments of those writers who are most highly

its separate state, nor suffer my body to be corrupted. Verse 31." Mr. Wesley however repeated *the creed* in its popular language without scruple.

It is no wonder that a question that relates to things so entirely out of our sight, and concerning which there is no express declaration in Holy Scripture, should have given rise to so much speculation. One of the principal supports of the contrary doctrine is, that as all power was *given* to Christ, so he must take possession of every part of his dominions, and consequently of HELL. That he had, and always will have, possession, AS GOD, can admit of no doubt: hence the apparent impossibility of a restoration. But did he thus take possession of HELL as *the Son of Man* and *Mediator?* If so, then it should seem the impossibility is removed, and there is *hope* for those consigned to it: and Dante's poetical inscription on the gates of his INFERNO, "Let him that enters here cast away hope," should be expunged!—The consequence, however foreign to the design of those who advocate the contrary opinion, seems to me inevitable. Of this entire speculation, however, Mr. Wesley did not believe one tittle. As Bishop Latimer said of the MASS, he could not find it IN THE BOOK.

esteemed, particularly Henry and Poole; leaving out what he thought needless or inconsistent with truth, and adding what he conceived necessary to perfect the sense, or make it conduce more directly to the spiritual profit of the reader. Those who can relish the Holy Scriptures in their own naked majesty, have used this help with thankfulness.

But this commentary would have been still more edifying, if Mr. Wesley could have superintended the printing of his works, like other writers. This the great work to which he was called forbade. It was originally intended that this exposition should be printed in three volumes quarto: the third volume being appropriated to the prophets. But when the printer, the late Mr. Pine, of Bristol, came to that part of the work, he was obliged to shorten the notes to get them into the prescribed size. Those that know Mr. Wesley's style are sensible that his sentences could not be curtailed without injury; and they have accordingly much regretted this circumstance. The work was admirably printed, and on such paper as is not now common; and it is, notwithstanding this defect, a *safe* and valuable exposition of the Old Testament. The preface, the summary of the various chapters, and the account of the writers of the different books, are all admirable.

In the year 1778 he began to publish a periodical work, which he called "The Arminian Magazine," as he designed to insert in it extracts and original treatises on universal redemption. Many of these are of great value, and were written by men of great erudition. In this work he reprinted an original tract of his own, entitled "Predestination Calmly Considered." Concerning this piece, Mr. Hampson, who cannot be suspected of partiality, has observed, "It is a model of controversy; clear and cogent; concise and argumentative; and the more convincing, because the spirit in which it is written is as amiable as the reasoning is unanswerable. Perhaps there is not in the English language a treatise which contains in so small a compass so full and masterly a refutation of the principle he opposes."

In this miscellany he also published an original sermon every two months. Concerning these I have already spoken. This publication has, upon the whole, been very profitable to its numerous readers. It is a Christian library in itself, containing controversial, doctrinal, and experimental divinity, in prose and

verse, animated by accounts of the triumphant deaths of many holy persons. Natural philosophy, and remarkable anecdotes from history and travels, have also a place in it. This work, which has been continued to this day, is now entitled, "THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST MAGAZINE," and its growing interest and great increase need no remark of mine. No person who wishes to know how *that work of God*, begun by the venerable founder of Methodism, goes on, can have that wish gratified without a constant perusal of this edifying publication.

What has been said of Mr. Wesley's design in writing, may also be said of his style. His conciseness, which has been often remarked, did not arise from his abhorring circumlocution as a writer only, but also as a Christian. He has often told me, that he made a conscience of using no more words on any subject than were strictly necessary. I am not sure that he did not sometimes, on this account, complain with Horace,

——brevis esse laboro,
Obscurus fio.

"Striving to be concise, I become obscure." But this was rarely the case. His perspicuity is as remarkable as the manliness of his style.

His original works have great force and energy. This, I have often thought, arose in a good degree from a circumstance not generally known. He never set himself to consider a subject, before the necessity of his treating upon it first appeared. Even then, he never wrote a line till his mind was fully impressed with the nature and importance of it. He has said on one of those occasions, as Job, 'Now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost!' And he might have often said the same. His ideas came thus warm, both from the head and the heart. His soul was in the subject: and hence the indelible impressions often made upon the minds of the readers.

I shall conclude this account, partly in the words of the writer I have already mentioned: "If usefulness be excellence; if public good ought to be the chief object of attention in public characters; and if the greatest benefactors to mankind are the most estimable; Mr. Wesley will be long remembered as one of the best of writers, as well as of men, as he was for more than fifty years the most diligent and indefatigable."—Thus all his biogra-

phers, after striving to lessen his character among men, have been obliged to subscribe to its general excellence!

There is, perhaps, nothing more difficult than to form a true judgment of the characters of men. Our information in this respect is in general partial or defective. Mankind are too much taken up with their own real or supposed wants, the calls of penury, or the insatiable cravings of desire, to attend to other men. A few there are in every age, who emerge from the obscurity which the multitude of persons and things makes the common lot. These cannot be lost in the general mass. Their station, their talents, their virtues, or their crimes, make them conspicuous. Mankind are obliged to look at them; and they are considered as friends or enemies, as their actions are supposed to affect the general weal.

Yet with regard to these, how hard it is to form a true judgment! Concerning the greatest men that have been in the world, how partial is the information, how great the variety of opinions!

> One thinks; on Luther Heaven's own Spirit fell,
> Another deems him instrument of hell!

Even the plainest facts are seen in different colours, according to the mirror which reflects them. And may not even Christian charity admit the justness of the Heathen's remark when he accounts for the obloquy often cast upon the greatest men?

> ——— *Diram qui contudit Hydram,*
> *Notaque fatali portenta labore subegit,*
> *Comperit invidiam supremo fine domari.*
> *Urit enim fulgore suo, qui prægravat artes*
> *Infra se positas; extinctus amabitur idem.*

> "The greatest men, ere they resign their breath,
> Find envy is not conquer'd but by death.
> The great Alcides, every labour past,
> Had still that monster to subdue at last.
> Oppress'd we feel the beam directly beat:
> These suns of glory please not till they set." POPE.

If it be then a truth, that even the world, on these accounts, does not always love its own; how should it love, and consequently be disposed to judge favourably of, those who are not of the world, but who testify continually that its deeds are evil? Those who receive the Holy Scriptures as of God, will easily admit the truth of this observation. If, indeed, 'Satan be the God of this world;' and those who are truly ministers of Christ,

be 'ambassadors for God,' and consequently their whole employment be to counteract, defeat, and destroy whatever is contrary to the kingdom of God: if they are not to 'count their lives dear to themselves,' so they may be faithful witnesses, and clear from the blood of all men; if these Scriptures are allowed to be the truth; how reasonable is the warning of our Lord! 'The disciple is not above his master: if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of his household: wo be unto you, when all men shall speak well of you: but blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.'

That Mr. Wesley largely drank of this cup, that it was indeed almost the only cup which men held to his lips for many years, is well known, and has abundantly appeared from the facts which I have, I hope with all plainness, laid before my readers. He also

> Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
> And bore the pelting scorn of half an age.

But he did indeed bear it. He turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. He slackened not his pace. Whatsoever he was called to do, he did it with his might, and was never hindered either by honour or dishonour, by good report or evil report.

It will appear from these memoirs, that we are not under the same difficulties in forming a judgment of him, as of most other men. His life, from the time that he became generally known, was spent in public. Many were the witnesses of the manner in which he filled up all his time. He also could say, *In secret I have done nothing*. I may add, that perhaps no man that ever lived has given a more minute account of himself than Mr. Wesley has done. He has published to all men his religious experience, and the labours and sufferings of his life, from day to day. And with respect to the motive which influenced him, which was so long disputed, no cloud remains upon him. In the honour due to Moses, (whose dearest relatives were merged in the mass of common Levites,) he also claims a share. Placed at the head of a great people by him who called them, he reaped nothing but toil and danger. Knowing that his station was from God, he never employed its influence, either for his own emolu-

ment or the aggrandizement of his family. His only care was to be faithful unto death; and to see that no impediment should arise by his means in the way of those whom God should call to carry on that work which was begun by him; and of this he has often largely conversed with me.

I shall therefore present to the reader a short review of the chief incidents of his life, and then proceed to a more particular delineation of him, both as a man and as a minister of Christ.

Mr. Wesley enjoyed the inestimable advantages of a religious education. He saw no irreligious conduct in his parents; they continually warned him against it, as the greatest possible evil; and he was not unfaithful. The sobriety, industry and piety of his youth were highly exemplary. He never was of the world in the gross sense of that expression. His chief employment, as well as highest ambition, in those days which are so commonly consumed in vanity or vice, was

*Inter silvas academi quærere verum :**

But his high attainments in literature did not cause him to forget God or eternity. Rather, the more he knew, the more he was inclined to say with Solomon, *This also is vanity:* and with Moses, who was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians, he declared, that *to be wise was to remember our latter end.* He was sensible of his high origin, that he came from God; and he remembered his high calling, to return to God, through him who has declared himself 'the way, the truth, and the life.'

To the praise of him who girded him with strength, I have to record, he took not counsel with flesh and blood. He took his station firmly on the Lord's side. He made haste, and delayed not to keep his commandments. And when, for this, his name was cast out as evil, he patiently submitted to be a follower of him who was 'despised and rejected of men, and who covered not his face from shame and spitting.'

But *before honour is humility.* To this his redeeming God now led him. He turned his eyes inward. He discovered to him "how far he was gone from original righteousness." God showed him, as his soul could bear, the depths of *inbred sin;* and the deviations, unfaithfulness, and consequently, the guiltiness before God, which is found in that state, (Romans vii,) he

* "To search out truth in academic groves."

has recorded with a plainness and a contrition seldom found in the narratives of pious men; even of those who have obtained the *victory of faith*. He consequently submitted to take upon him his true character; and he acted agreeably thereto. He humbled himself before God. The pride of the scholar was lost in the abasement of the sinner. This was the gracious return, with which the Lord recompensed the zeal, that led him from his parents, friends, academical honours, and every thing the world calls good and great. Painful self-knowledge was the good he reaped from this costly sacrifice.

But, 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Some foretastes of this the Lord had already given him; but now, 'out of his fulness he received, and grace for grace.' He was 'endued with power from on high.' He was 'chosen out of the world.' He became zealous for the Lord. 'The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, because he had anointed him to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'

Zeal and prudence are the chief graces whereby a man is fitted to serve his neighbour. The former is dangerous, when alone; and the latter selfish, vile, and useless. But when united, how mighty are they in operation! They are *terrible as an army with banners*.

They were united in Mr. Wesley. Like Paul, the cry of his heart from the moment he knew the lovingkindness of the Lord, was, 'What wouldst thou have me to do?' He also could say, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.' The love of Christ constrained him to burst every band asunder that was inconsistent with the glory of God and the happiness of man. In vain did worldly men lament the violated order, under which sloth and impiety had found an honourable asylum. Filled with *the spirit of love and of a sound mind*, he cried out, "What is this order of which you speak? Will it serve instead of the knowledge and love of God? Will this order rescue those from the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will? Will it keep those who are escaped a little way, from turning back into Egypt? If not, how shall I answer it to God, if, rather than violate I know not what order, I sacrifice thousands of souls thereto? I dare not do it. It is at the peril of my soul. Indeed if by *order* were meant true Christian discipline,

whereby all the living members of Christ are knit together in one, and all that are putrid and dead cut off from the body: this order I reverence, for it is of God. But where is it to be found? Where, but among the very people whom you continually blame for their violation and contempt of it?"

But how inviolably did he keep all order consistent with saving souls from death! Herein his truly *Christian* prudence eminently shone. He rendered to all their due, whether to the king as supreme, or to his ministers in church or state; exhorting continually all who were under his care, that they should thus adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, and evidence to all men their earnest desire to 'lead a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.'

And how great was his labour to save souls from death! He was indeed a perfect foe to rest, though no man was more fitted to enjoy whatsoever of wise, or good, or useful, or elegant, can be found in retirement. Even unto hoary hairs, and beyond the usual life of man, he was abundant in labours. The Lord, to whom he had given his whole life, seemed to grant him a dispensation from the general lot. His strength at more than fourscore years, was not *labour and sorrow*. He, to the last, sought 'not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.' He soared above that harmless wish which the generality of mankind indulge,

To crown a youth of labour with an age of ease.

He slackened not his pace to the last week of his life. He resigned his soul and his charge together, into the hands of his merciful and faithful Redeemer.

Respecting such a man, even the smallest particulars will not be unpleasing. He was, in his person, rather below the middle size, but remarkably well proportioned. He had what some call a clean constitution in a high degree. He seemed not to have an atom of superfluous flesh, and yet was muscular and strong. His whole person was expressive of the activity and health which generally arise from strong bodily powers, preserved by temperance and exercise. His face was remarkably fine, even to old age. A clear smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, conspired to render him a venerable and most interesting

figure. The freshness of his complexion continued to the last week of his life. It has often been observed, that many who were deeply prejudiced against him, have been changed in a moment into sentiments of veneration and esteem, on being introduced into his presence.

In dress, he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity. A narrow plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and his thin silver locks gave to his whole person an air of something primitive and apostolic.

The same neatness and simplicity was manifest in every circumstance of his life. In his chamber and study, during his winter months of residence in London I never observed that a book was misplaced, or even a scrap of paper left unheeded. He could enjoy every convenience of life; and yet, he acted in the smallest things like a man who was not to continue an hour in one place. He seemed at home in every place, settled, satisfied, and happy: and yet was ready every hour to take a journey of a thousand miles.

His conversation was always pleasing, and frequently interesting and instructive in the highest degree. By reading, travelling, and continual observation, he had acquired a fund of knowledge, which he dispensed with a propriety and perspicuity that has been rarely equalled. The Greek and Latin classics were as familiar to him as the most common English authors; and also many of the best French writers. Yet though so richly furnished, we believe those of the most improved taste have never observed in him the affectation of learning. He joined in every kind of discourse that was innocent. As he knew that all nature is full of God, he became all things to all men in conversing on those subjects. But his delight was to speak of 'God as being in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;' and he strove to bring every conversation to this point. One thing has astonished those who have been much in his company: he generally concluded the conversation with two or three verses of a hymn, illustrative of what had just been spoken; and this he was enabled to do from the inexhaustible stores of his own and his brother's poetry, of which his memory was a rich repository. Thus the philosopher, and the man of the world, were often

surprised into a confession of Christ as filling all in all, and were obliged to recollect the advice of the old Heathen,

Εκ Διος αρχωμεθα και εν Δι ληγετε Μωσαι.*

The late Dr. Samuel Johnson, with whom Mrs. Hall, Mr. Wesley's sister, was intimate for some years, desired that she would procure him an interview with her brother. She made known his desire to Mr. Wesley, and a day was accordingly appointed for him to dine with the doctor, at his house in Salisbury-court. The doctor conformed to Mr. Wesley's hours, and appointed two o'clock: the dinner however was not ready till three. They conversed till that time. Mr. Wesley had set apart two hours to spend with his learned host. In consequence of this, he rose up as soon as dinner was ended and departed. The doctor was extremely disappointed, and could not conceal his chagrin. Mrs. Hall said, "Why, doctor, my brother has been with you two hours!" He replied, "Two hours, madam! I could talk all day, and all night too, with your brother."

Mr. Boswell in his Life of that eminent man, informs us, that the doctor observed to him,—"John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs, and have his talk out as I do."—But the doctor was under a small mistake. Mr. Wesley could not fold his legs, &c., only because he had no leisure, but because he was *under the law to Christ.* That law respects our use of time, as well as of every other talent.

Mr. Boswell informs us, that on Easter Sunday, April 25, 1781, he dined with Dr. Johnson: Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Williams were of the company. The conversation turned upon the subject—*Of the saints that rose with Christ.* Mrs. Hall wished the doctor to discuss the question, but he was reluctant. She strove to provoke him to it by some remarks of her own, but in vain. The mighty mind of our English Aristotle, like him of Greece, revolted from the contemplation of such subjects. His great sincerity would not stoop to dissemble his fears, and *his faith* was not of that kind which could look *through* the dark valley: he could only look *at* it, and the sight appalled him. Mr. Charles Wesley observed to me, "that there were but few ladies that the doctor would suffer to address him so freely as Mrs. Hall."—"It was

* "Muses, begin and end with God supreme."

surprising," said he, "how he would listen to, and bear her interrogations, and sometimes even her venturing to differ from him."—It does not surprise me. He not only reverenced her brother beyond all men, but it was impossible for such a man not to respect the truly Wesleyan understanding which she possessed. Besides, there was no stimulus to contradiction when conversing with her. There was no rivalship, no fear of being conquered; and therefore his vast understanding was in full and easy dominion. Mr. Boswell candidly confesses, that the doctor sometimes strove more for victory than he ought; and that the greatest sophist of the age had too often recourse to sophisms.

The following letter from Dr. Johnson to Mr. Wesley, is a striking proof of the high estimation in which he was held by that truly great man:

"*Febrtuary* 6, 1776.

"SIR,

"When I received your commentary on the Bible, I durst not at first flatter myself that I was to keep it, having so little claim to so valuable a present; and when Mrs. Hall informed me of your kindness, I was hindered, from time to time, from returning you those thanks which I now entreat you to accept.

"I have thanks likewise to return for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the public I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right, who, though he saw the audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato staid.

"I am, reverend sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I have already mentioned his exactness in redeeming time. This must appear to every reader of reflection from the many and various duties of his eminent situation, which he punctually fulfilled. But still I believe it hardly possible for those who were not intimate with him to have a just idea of his faithfulness in this respect. In many things he was gentle and easy to be entreated: in this point decisive and inexorable. One day his

chaise was delayed beyond the appointed time. He had put up his papers, and left his apartment. While waiting at the door he was heard to say, by one that stood near him, "I have lost ten minutes for ever!"—Speaking at another time with a person who said, "You need not be in a hurry, sir,"—Mr. Wesley replied, "A hurry! No; I have no time to be in a hurry."—He had no time to mend any thing that he either wrote or did. He therefore always did every thing, not only with quietness, but with what might be thought slowness. As a writer especially he was the slowest I ever saw.

Besides his Journal, in which he recorded the daily events of his life, he kept a diary, in which he exactly noted the employment of every hour. He wrote this in short-hand. His hour of rising, his preaching, what he read or wrote till breakfast, and the after duties of the day, were faithfully recorded. He carried a book of this kind continually with him, in the first page of which he always wrote this concise determination,

"I resolve, Deo juvante,*

"1. To devote an hour, morning and evening: no pretence or excuse whatsoever.†

"2. To converse, Κατα Θεον;‡ no lightness; no ευτραπελια."§

He was equally faithful in respect to the worldly goods, with which the Great Proprietor of heaven and earth had entrusted him. He strictly followed the rules he laid down for others. He gained all he could (viz., by writing,) without hurting his *soul*, his *body*, or his *neighbour*. He saved all he could, cutting off every needless expense, and wasting nothing. And he gave all he could: he rendered unto God the things which were God's. He faithfully dispensed all he could thus gain and save, being 'merciful after his power, willing to communicate, glad to distribute, laying up for himself a good foundation against the time to come, that he might lay hold on eternal life.'

In this point, even those who have seemed desirous to find fault have been constrained to do him justice. "Perhaps," says Mr. Hampson, "the most charitable man in England was Mr. Wesley. His liberality to the poor knew no bounds. He gave away, not merely a certain part of his income, but all he had. His own necessities provided for, he devoted all the rest to the

* With the help of God. † These hours were for private prayer.
‡ According to God: setting God before his eyes. § Jesting.

necessities of others. He engaged in this good work at an early period. When he had thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two-and-thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The next year he received a hundred and twenty pounds. Still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two. In this ratio he proceeded during the rest of his life; and we are persuaded that, upon a moderate calculation, he gave away in fifty years, upwards of thirty thousand pounds." His accounts lie before me, and his expenses are noted with the greatest exactness. Every penny is recorded; and I am persuaded Mr. Hampson might have increased the supposed sum to several thousands more. In the last year of his life, he wrote in his diary, "I shall keep no more accounts. It must suffice, that I give to God all I can, that is, all I have."

In mercy to the bodies of men, his friend Mr. Howard was the only person I ever knew who could be compared to him. The extensive work of love in which they were both engaged, made it almost impossible for them to converse together in this world. But they have eternity to live together. They are now in that world, where 'the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick;' and thousands who have blessed them upon earth, have welcomed them into 'those everlasting habitations.'

A letter from Alexander Knox, Esq., of Londonderry, (now of Dublin,) contains a pleasing anecdote of that great and good man, Mr. Howard. As it also respects Mr. Wesley, I shall make no apology for giving it to my readers. "Mr. Howard," observes my correspondent, "in the course of his tour through Ireland in the year 1787, spent a few days in Londonderry. I earnestly wished to see him; but bad health confined me to the house, and I thought I could not be gratified. Such were my thoughts when I was told, a gentleman had called to see me. It was Mr. Howard! I was most delightfully surprised. I acknowledge it as one of the happiest moments of my life. He came to see me because he understood I was Mr. Wesley's friend. He began immediately to speak of him. He told me he had seen him shortly before in Dublin; that he had spent some hours with him, and was greatly edified by his conversation. 'I was,' said he, 'encouraged by him to go on vigor-

ously with my own designs. I saw in him, how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance. And I thought, why may not I do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if I am only as assiduous and persevering? And I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever.' I cannot quit this subject," continues Mr. Knox, "without observing, that excepting Mr. Wesley, no man ever gave me a more perfect idea of angelic goodness than Mr. Howard. His whole conversation exhibited a most interesting tissue of exalted piety, meek simplicity, and glowing charity. His striking adieu I never shall forget. 'Farewell, sir,' said he; 'when we meet again, may it be in heaven, or farther on our way to it!' Precious man! May your prayer be answered! *Cum tua sit anima mea.*"*

In the beginning of the year 1789, Mr. Howard called at Mr. Wesley's house in the City-road, London, in order to take his leave of him, as he was again flying to the continent at the call of mercy. He carried his last quarto upon the jails under his arm, in order to present it to his friend; but Mr. Wesley was on his way to Ireland. He favoured us with his company for upwards of an hour. He delightfully called to mind the former days, when he had first heard Mr. Wesley at his seat in Bedfordshire, and well recollected the discourse which made the first deep impression on his mind. The text was Eccles. ix, 10: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.' "I have," said he, "but one thing to do, and I strive to do it with my might. The Lord has taken away whatsoever might be an incumbrance. All places are alike to me, for I find misery in all. He gives me continual health. I have no need to be careful for any thing. I eat no animal food, and can have all I want in the most inconvenient situation. Present my respects and love to Mr. Wesley. Tell him, I hoped to have seen him once more. Perhaps we may meet again in this world; but if not, we shall meet, I trust, in a better." We hung upon his lips, delighted. Such a picture of love, simplicity, and cheerfulness, we have seldom seen. Taking his leave, he observed, "I have gained, I think, a little knowledge concerning the plague. I shall, therefore, after visiting the Russian camp, pass into the Turkish, and from thence by Constantinople

* 'May my soul be with thine.'

to Egypt." So he purposed, his heart being enlarged with the love of God and man. But while this angel of mercy was ministering to the sons of war, in the hospital of the Russian camp, God said, 'It is enough; come up hither. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'

Mr. Wesley's charitable donations were often misrepresented. Envy will never want a pretext to put the worst construction on the best and most generous actions. Many years ago, Erasmus, bishop of Crete, visited London. It has been said, that his episcopal character was authenticated by a letter from the patriarch of Smyrna; who added, that the Turks had driven him from his see for baptizing a Mussulman into the faith of Christ. That the known liberality of Mr. Wesley should induce him to be kind to such a stranger in distress, is not to be wondered at; but the report, circulated in some periodical publications of that time, that Mr. Charles Wesley had offered him forty guineas to consecrate his brother a bishop, is totally without foundation: it has not even the shadow of probability to give it credit. 'Having begun in the Spirit, he would not thus be made perfect by the flesh;' nor would Mr. Charles Wesley's principles admit of his desiring such a consecration, nor of making such an offer. Three local preachers were ordained by the bishop; but Mr. C. Wesley would not act with them. The venerable Sampson Staniforth, whose eventful life has been published, was one of these; but he consented not to act upon his orders, rather than leave the connexion. He died in the triumph of faith, honoured and beloved by his brethren.

As Mr. Wesley sincerely offered up that excellent prayer in the Church service, "For all sorts and conditions of men," so he strove in every possible way for its fulfilment. Among the great number of pamphlets which he wrote, there was a notable one, entitled "Thoughts on Slavery." He was one of the earliest writers on this subject, which has since undergone so complete an investigation. He has treated it in a moral and religious view. It is written with great strength and feeling, and had a powerful influence, especially in America. The noble examples of so many persons in those states in emancipating their slaves, and the regulations made by the government there to meliorate their condition, it is supposed was chiefly caused by that publication. The last letter which he ever wrote, (five

days before his death,) was to a highly honoured friend, then engaged in bringing about the abolition of that execrable trade, since so happily effected. What a fit close to such a life spent in 'preaching deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to those who were bound!' I am happy in being able at length, after so many years, to give it publicity, in a day when the Lord seems to have 'risen out of his place,' in behalf of these outcasts of men.

"*London, February* 26, 1791.

"DEAR SIR,

"Unless the Divine Power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*,* I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villany, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But 'if God be for you, who can be against you?' Are all of them together stronger than God? O! 'be not weary in well doing.' Go on in the name of God, and in the power of his might! till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

"Reading this morning a tract, wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance,—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress: it being a *law*, in all our colonies, that the *oath* of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villany is this!

That He who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of

"Dear sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

But to return. I have observed, that it was not easy to do justice to Mr Wesley, as a writer, without considering the deep motive from which he acted in this and all things, viz., a single desire to please God. I am ready to make the same observation respecting him as a preacher. It appears from some discourses

* Athanasius against the world.

which he delivered before he went to Georgia, that he had ceased even then to be conformed to this world in that character also. We find nothing of what St. Paul calls the 'deceitful words of man's wisdom' in them: nothing of that artificial eloquence, so much admired by those who have formed their taste only by heathen masters. It was said of some of the fathers in the Christian church, (who had been philosophers, the *literati* of that day,) that they came into Canaan laden with Egyptian gold. They did so; and in a little time they persuaded the simple-hearted to prize it more than the gold of the sanctuary. They were indeed the first grand corrupters of the gospel of Christ. How very soon, like the philosophical divines of the present day, did they 'intrude into those things which they had not seen,' and which only God can reveal, 'vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind.' Mr. Wesley renounced this vain deceit, and betook himself, even thus early, to 'the sure word of prophecy.' But especially after the full light of the gospel shone upon his heart, he was steadfast and immovable therein, speaking in every respect as the oracles of God; holding forth 'the promise of the Father,' the justifying and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, to all who repent and believe the gospel. Speaking of some in that day who were still fond of philosophising, and of rhetorical display, he observes, "My soul is sick of this sublime divinity. Let mine be that of a little child; and let the deepest words I use to express it, be those I find in the oracles of God."

The sacrifice made by Mr. Wesley is perhaps too generally overlooked. Men can see and acknowledge the sacrifice of his country, friends, and of all those gratifications for which so many pine. But to become a fool for Christ's sake!—to persevere to the end of his life in this 'foolishness of preaching!'—to know nothing in this respect also, but 'Jesus Christ and him crucified!'—this was a sacrifice indeed, especially in a man of whom it might be said, that he also

"Had made the whole internal world his own."

John Nichols, Esq., the venerable proprietor of the Gentleman's Magazine, has well elucidated this part of Mr. Wesley's character:—"This extraordinary man, though he was endowed with eminent talents, was more distinguished by their use than

even by their possession. Though his taste was classic, and his manners elegant, he sacrificed that society in which he was peculiarly calculated to shine; gave up those preferments which his abilities might have obtained; and devoted a long life in practising and enforcing common duties. Instead of being 'an ornament to literature,' he was a blessing to his fellow creatures; instead of being 'the genius of the age,' he was the servant of God!"—*Literary Anecdotes*, vol. v, p. 247. Edit. 1812.

A view of these excellencies, added to many others which he possessed, drew forth the following beautiful effusion from the elegant and pious Cowper:

"O! I have seen, (nor hope, perhaps, in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again,)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield.
Grave without dulness; learned without pride;
Exact, yet not precise; though meek, keen-eyed.
A man that could have foil'd at their own play,
A dozen would-be's of the modern day.
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce:
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear.
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme:
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seem'd there at home:
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well!"

Happy eloquence indeed! For though 'the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God,' was excluded both from his creed and from his sermons; yet how richly was his mind stored with gospel truth! How strong, how full, how perspicuous was his elocution! I cannot call to mind those happy times, when I sat at his feet, and heard him hold forth the word of life, without recollecting that beautiful passage in Homer:

Ἀλλ' ὁτε δη μυθῳ και μήδεα πασιν υφαινον,
Ἡ τοι μεν Μενελαος επιτροχαδην αγορευε,
Παυρα μεν, αλλα μαλα λιγεως, επει ου πολυμυθος,
Οὐδ' αφαμαρτοεπης.

"When Atreus' son harangued the list'ning train,
Just was his sense, and his expression plain;
His words succinct, yet full, without a fault;
He spoke no more than just the thing he ought." POPE.

Even when fatigue of body, or peculiar exercises of mind, caused him to fall short of his usual excellence, yet the remark of Dr. Beattie, of Aberdeen, who had heard him at one of those seasons, was generally verified, "It was not a masterly sermon, yet none but a master could have preached it."—At this moment I well remember my first thought, after hearing him preach nearly fifty years ago: "*Spiritual* things are *natural* things to this man!"

To detract from this manifold excellence, much has been said concerning his ambition and love of power. This is usual among men: if they can find nothing to blame in the conduct, it seems a relief to judge the spirit. It would, therefore, be strange, if he had escaped a charge of this kind. "You take too much upon you," is a censure of an ancient date; and to which all who have truly served Christ have been obliged to submit. Whether he really loved power, is only known to the Searcher of hearts, and will appear in that day when 'God shall judge the secrets of men.' It is certain he always denied it, and that in the most solemn manner.* Answering for himself, when thus accused several years ago, he observes, "When those persons, who afterwards composed the society, first put themselves under my care, the desire was on their part, not mine. My desire was to live and die in retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help and be guiltless before God. What then is my power? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the societies under my care: of choosing and removing leaders and stewards; of receiving, or not receiving, helpers; and of appointing them when, where, and how to help me. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought, nay, a hundred times laboured to throw off; so it is on the same considerations, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.

"But several gentlemen are offended at my having so much power. My answer to them is this: I did not seek any part of this power: it came upon me unawares. But when it was come, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I was never fond of it. I always did, and do now

* With that ambition mentioned by St. Paul, (an ambition only known to faith,) he was largely filled.—2 Cor. v, 9: 'Wherefore we labour—(*Φιλοτιμουμεθα.*) We are ambitious that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.'

bear it as my burden: the burden which God lays upon me; and therefore I dare not yet lay it down."

It has been my aim in stating the particulars of his life, that the reader might himself form a judgment of Mr. Wesley's character. And I believe, upon a review of those particulars, the candid will be ready to allow, that whatever degree of power he enjoyed, he received it in the order of God, and consequently it was his bounden duty to be faithful to it; which he could not have been if he had laid it down without a manifest providence calling him so to do. An attentive reader cannot but see, that from the time he truly turned to God, he took, according to Christ's direction, 'the lowest seat.' To escape from these 'worldly lusts,' in every sense of the expression, he would fain have buried himself in the uncultivated wilds of America, among those who roam

"In quest of prey, and live upon their bow,"

happy in the idea of leaving all the world, to be an unknown, unhonoured instrument in the hand of God, in 'giving to his Son the heathen for his inheritance.' Disappointed in this, he hastened to bury himself in his loved retirement at Oxford. Just then, He, upon whose shoulders is the government, said, "Come up higher! Give this man place!" Thus was the Scripture fulfilled. 'He humbled himself before God,' and was 'exalted in due time.'

And he was faithful to that which God conferred upon him. He used it according to his holy word. I believe even those who have pined at his pre-eminence, have never charged him with seeking his own ease or advantage thereby; and no principle was ever sacrificed to it. To the end of his life he 'endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;' and could say to the most active, "Come on! follow me!" And with respect to the discipline which he introduced, this too he laboured to form, not according to his own will, ease, or advantage, but according to the Bible, and to the purest ages of the Christian church. He considered it with all the attention of which he was master; he took counsel with those who laboured with him, and with the most pious of his friends; and when, after several years' trial, he was convinced by the blessed effects which followed that he was not mistaken, he would not suffer a stone of the building to be removed by those who did not love such strict-

ness.* When they attempted it they found him watchful, and not to be taken by surprise; and their force availed as little as their wisdom. As his temper was naturally impetuous, and as he was a stranger to dissimulation, I am not sure that he did not upon some of those occasions, speak with a degree of warmth which cannot be wholly defended. But it was gone in a moment. It might be said of him also,

> "He carried anger, as the flint bears fire;
> Which, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
> And straight is cold again."

And no man was ever more sensible of those improprieties than he was, or more ready to acknowledge them. There have been instances of this, when he has asked the offended person forgiveness in such a genuine spirit of humility, as much affected all who were present.

Perhaps there never was a man more free from jealousy or suspicion than Mr. Wesley. As he used no guile himself, he never suspected it in others. It was not easy to convince him that any one had intentionally deceived him; and when convinced by facts, he would allow no more than that it was so in that single instance. He firmly held the loving, noble logic of the gospel, as well as that of the schools, and knew, that to argue thus from a particular, to a general, was a fallacy which Christ would not hold guiltless. One happy consequence of this (among ten thousand) was, that his numerous friends rested secure of his love, and knew that they had only to pursue the path of uprightness to possess it to the end undiminished.

To the charge of ambition and love of power is added, chiefly by Mr. Southey, that of a "voracious credulity." I doubt if these are ever found united in the same character, except, perhaps, in some cases of extreme weakness of intellect. An ambitious man is suspicious, not credulous. He is striving to impose upon mankind, and consequently he is careful that they should not impose upon him. Concerning the sobriety of Mr. Wesley's mind, and his caution respecting vulgar errors and popular notions, it may

* There have been several attempts, since Mr. Wesley's death, to secularize this great work, and give to it a retrogade and earthly direction: at one time, by the influence of wealth; at another, by popular suffrage. We have seen Dr. Whitehead occasionally using both these principles; *and other men have arisen, speaking such perverse things.* But their work has been made manifest, as being of man; while the real work divine has held on its way, and become more pure by these siftings.

be thought enough has been said; but his firm, and what sceptics would call, his obstinate belief of, and submission to, every thing contained in the Holy Scriptures, having exposed him to this attack, it may be needful to give it a more full consideration. To set the question at rest concerning apparitions, witchcraft, possessions, and Mr. Wesley's 'credulity' respecting such things, I need only present to the reader what Mr. Watson has said on the subject, in reply to Mr. Southey:

"On the general question of supernatural appearances, it may be remarked, that Mr. Wesley might at least plead authorities for his faith as high, as numerous, and as learned, as any of our modern sceptics for their doubts. It is in modern times only that this species of infidelity has appeared, with the exception of the sophists of the atheistical sects in Greece and Rome, and the Sadducees among the Jews. The unbelief so common in the present day among free-thinkers and half-thinkers on such subjects, places itself therefore, with only these exceptions, in opposition to the belief of the learned and unlearned of every age and of every nation, polished, semi-civilized, and savage, in every quarter of the globe. It does more; it places itself in opposition to the Scriptures, from which all the criticism, bold, subtle, profane, or absurd, which has been resorted to, can never expunge either apparitions, possessions, or witchcraft.* It opposes itself to testimony, which, if feeble and unsatisfactory in many instances, is such in others, that no man, in any other

* Dr. Anthony Horneck has well observed, "If some few melancholy monks or old women had seen such ghosts and apparitions, we might then suspect, that what they pretended to have seen might be nothing but the effect of a disordered imagination; but when the whole world, as it were, and men of all religions, men of all ages too, have been forced by strong evidences, to acknowledge the truth of such occurrences, I know not what strength there can be in the argument drawn from the consent of nations, in things of a sublimer nature, if here it be of no efficacy. Men that have attempted to evade the places of Scripture, which speak of ghosts and witches, we see, how they are forced to turn and wind the texts, and make, in a manner, noses of wax of them, and rather squeeze than gather the sense, as if the holy writers had spoke like sophisters, and not like men who made it their business to condescend to the capacity of the common people. Let a man put no force at all on those passages of Holy Writ, and then try what sense they are like to yield. It is strange to see, how some men have endeavoured to elude the story of the witch of Endor; and, as far as I can judge, play more hocuspocus tricks in the explication of that passage, than the witch herself did in raising the deceased Samuel. To those straits is falsehood driven, while truth loves plain and undisguised expressions, and error will seek out holes and labyrinths to hide itself, while truth plays aboveboard, and scorns the subterfuges of the sceptic interpreter."

case, would refuse assent to it; or, so refusing, he would make himself the object of a just ridicule. That there have been many impostures, is allowed; that many have been deceived, is certain; and that all such accounts should be subjected to rigorous scrutiny, before they can have any title to command our belief, ought to be insisted upon; but even imposture and error pre-suppose a previous opinion in favour of what is pretended or mistaken; and if but one account in twenty, or a hundred, stands upon credible evidence, and is corroborated by circumstances in which, from their nature, there could be no mistake, that is sufficient to disturb the quiet, and confound the systems, of the whole body of infidels.* Every age has its dangers. In former times the danger lay in believing too much; in our own, the propensity is to believe too little.† The only ground which

* "And for as much as such coarse-grained philosophers as those Hobbians and Spinosians, and the rest of the rabble, slight religion and the Scriptures, because there is such express mention of spirits and angels in them, things that their dull souls are so inclinable to conceit to be impossible; I look upon it as a special piece of providence, that there are ever and anon such fresh examples of apparitions as may rub up and awaken their benumbed and lethargic minds, into a suspicion at least, if not assurance, that there are other intelligent beings besides those that are clad in heavy earth or clay; in this, I say, methinks the Divine Providence does plainly outwit the powers of the dark kingdom."—*Dr. Henry More.*

† "There are times in which men believe every thing; in this wherein we now are, they believe nothing; I think there is a mean to be chosen, we may not believe every thing, but surely something ought to be believed. For this spirit of incredulity, and this character of a brave spirit, is good for nothing, and I have not as yet discovered the use thereof. 'Tis true, credulity hath destroyed religion, and introduced a thousand superstitions. For which reason I am content, that men stand upon their guard when any thing is debated and reported concerning wonderful and pious histories. The generality of those which are called honest men, are come so far from thence, that they have cast themselves on the other extreme, and believe nothing. Nevertheless whither goes this, and what will be the issue of it? 'Tis to deny providence, 'tis to make ourselves believe, God does not intermeddle in the affairs below, and to ruin all the principles of human faith, and by consequence to cast ourselves on a perfect scepticism, which is peradventure a disposition of mind the most dangerous to religion of any in the world. By doubting all matters of fact which have any appearance of extraordinary, they tell us they have no intention to extend it any farther than the history of the world. But we don't perceive, that we insensibly entertain a habit of doubting, which extends itself to every thing. There is a God; we all consent thereto. There is a providence; we all profess and avow it. Nothing comes to pass without him. Is it possible, that God should so hide himself behind his creatures, and under the veil of second causes, that he should never at any time, though never so little, draw aside the curtain? If we have taken the resolution to deny the truth of all extraordinary matters of fact, what shall we do with history, both sacred and profane? He must have a hardness and an impudence that I understand not, that can put all historians in one rank, and range them

a Christian can safely take on these questions is, that the *a priori* arguments of philosophic unbelievers, as to the 'absurdity' and 'impossibility' of these things, go for nothing, since the Scriptures have settled the fact that they have occurred, and have afforded not the least intimation that they should at any time cease to occur. Such supernatural visitations are, therefore, possible; and, when they are reported, ought to be carefully examined, and neither too hastily admitted, nor too promptly rejected. An acute and excellent philosopher of modern times has come to the same conclusion: 'Although Δεισιδαιμονια, or a fear of spirits, hath been abused by vain or weak people, and carried to extremes perhaps by crafty and designing men, the most rigorous philosophy will not justify its being entirely rejected. That subordinate beings are never permitted or commissioned to be the ministers of the will of God, is a hard point to be proved.'*

"Mr. Wesley's belief in these visitations is, therefore, generally considered no proof of a peculiar credulousness of mind. On this he thought with all, except the ancient atheists and Sadducees, modern infidels, and a few others, who, whilst in this point they agree with infidels, most inconsistently profess faith in the revelations of the Scriptures. Mr. Southey himself cannot attack Mr. Wesley on the general principle, since he gives credit to the account of the disturbances at Epworth, as preternaturally produced, and thinks that some dreams are the results of more than natural agency.

"How then does the author prove the 'voracity and extra-

all together as forgers of lies. I admire the argument of those writers, which lived two or three thousand years from one another, who nevertheless have all conspired to deceive us, according to our moderns, and there is neither sorcerers, nor magicians, nor possessions, nor apparitions of demons, nor any thing like it! 'Tis much that these gentlemen have not pushed on their confidence, even to deny the truth of matters of fact contained in the Scriptures, which would be very convenient for them. In the times that the sacred writers writ their books, there were all these things; and where do we find that they ought to cease, and that a time was to come in which devils should no more deceive men, and in which the heaven should speak no more in prodigies? Because historians have not been infallible, must we believe that they have been all liars, and in all things?—Let us conclude, therefore, that the credulity of our ancestors hath caused many misohievous tales to be received as faithful histories; but also that it hath been the cause, that very faithful histories do at this day pass for false tales."—*Jurieu's Pastoral Letters.*

* Mr. Andrew Baxter's Essay on the Philosophy of Dreaming, in the "*Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul.*"

vagance' of Mr. Wesley's credulity? Mr. Southey believes in one ghost story; Mr. Wesley might believe in twenty or a hundred. Mr. Southey believes in a few preternatural dreams, say some four or five; Mr. Wesley may have believed in twice that number. This, however, proves nothing; for credulity is not to be measured by the number of statements which a person believes, but by the evidence on which he believes them. To have made out his case, Mr. Southey should have shown, that the stories which he presumes Mr. Wesley to have credited, stood on insufficient testimony. He has not touched this point; but he deems them 'silly and monstrous;' that is, he judges of them *a priori*, and thus reaches his conclusion. He did not, however, reflect, that his own faith in ghosts and dreams, as far as it goes, will be deemed as silly and monstrous by all his brother philosophers, as the faith which goes beyond it. Their reasoning concludes as fully against what he credits, as against what Mr. Wesley credited; and, on the same ground, a mere opinion of what is reasonable and fitting, they have the right to turn his censures against himself, and to conclude his credulity 'voracious,' and his mind disposed to superstition. As to the accounts of apparitions inserted by Mr. Wesley in his Magazine, Mr. Southey thinks that he had no motive to believe and insert them, except the mere pleasure of believing. I can furnish him with several other motives which, I doubt not, influenced their publication. The first was to collect remarkable accounts of such facts, and to offer them to the judgment of the world. It is assumed by Mr. Southey, that Mr. Wesley believed every account he published. This is not true. He frequently remarks, that he gives no opinion, or that 'he knows not what to make of the account,' or that 'he leaves every one to form his own judgment of it.' He met with those relations in reading, or from persons deemed by him credible, and he put them on record as facts reported to have happened. Now, as to an unbeliever, I know not what sound objection he can make to that being recorded which has commanded the faith of others. As a part of the history of human opinions, such accounts are curious, and have their use. But if Mr. Wesley's readers were believers in such prodigies, it was surely not uninteresting to them to know what had been related. It neither followed that the editor of the work believed every account, nor that his readers should

consider it true because it was printed. It was for them to judge of the evidence on which the relation stood. I should make a very large deduction from the stories of this kind which might be brought together; but I should feel much obliged to any one to form such a collection, that I might be able to judge of them for myself. Many of these accounts, however, Mr. Wesley did credit, because he thought that they stood on credible testimony; and he published them for that very purpose, for which he believed they were permitted to occur,—to confirm the faith of men in an invisible state, and the immortality of the soul. These then were Mr. Wesley's motives for inserting such accounts in his Magazine; and to the censure which Mr. Southey has passed upon him on this account, I shall oppose at least the equally weighty authority of the learned Dr. Henry More, in his letter to Glanville, the author of *Sadducismus Triumphatus*.* 'Wherefore, let the small philosophic *Sir Toplings* of the present age deride as much as they will, those that lay out their pains in committing to writing certain well-attested stories of apparitions, do real service to true religion and sound philosophy, and the most effectual and accommodate to the confounding of infidelity and atheism, even in the judgment of atheists themselves, who are as much afraid of the truth of these stories as an ape is of a whip, and therefore force themselves with might and main to disbelieve them, by reason of the dreadful consequence of them as to themselves.' It is sensibly observed by Jortin, in his remarks on the diabolical possessions in the age of our Lord, that 'one reason for which Divine Providence should suffer evil spirits to exert their malignant powers at that time, might be to give a check to Sadducism among the Jews, and atheism among the Gentiles; and to remove in some measure these two great impediments to the reception of the gospel.' For moral uses, supernatural visitations have doubtless been allowed in subsequent ages; and he who believes in them, only spreads their moral the farther by giving them publicity. Before such a person can be fairly censured, the ground of his faith ought to be disproved, for he only acts consistently. This task would, however, prove one of the most difficult which Mr. Southey has yet undertaken."

* Sadducism Triumphed over.

The following portrait of Mr. Wesley appeared soon after his death, in a very respectable publication. It rather savours of the 'praise that is of men;' yet as I believe it does not in fact exceed the truth, I shall insert it:

"His indefatigable zeal in the discharge of his duty has been long witnessed by the world; but as mankind are not always inclined to put a generous construction on the exertion of singular talents,* his motives were imputed to the love of popularity, ambition, and lucre. It now appears that he was actuated by a disinterested regard to the immortal interest of mankind. He laboured, and studied, and preached, and wrote, to propagate what he believed to be the gospel of Christ. The intervals of these engagements were employed in governing and regulating the concerns of his numerous societies; assisting the necessities, solving the difficulties, and soothing the afflictions of his hearers. He observed so rigid a temperance, and allowed himself so little repose, that he seemed to be above the infirmities of nature, and to act independent of the earthly tenement he occupied. The recital of the occurrences of every day of his life would be the greatest encomium.

"Had he loved wealth, he might have accumulated without bounds. Had he been fond of power, his influence would have been worth courting by any party. I do not say he was without ambition;† he had that which Christianity need not blush at, and which virtue is proud to confess. I do not mean that which is gratified by splendour and large possessions; but that which commands the hearts and affections, the homage and gratitude, of thousands. For him they felt sentiments of veneration, only inferior to those which they paid to Heaven: to him they looked as their father, their benefactor, their guide to glory and immortality: for him they fell prostrate before God, with prayers and tears, to spare his doom, and prolong his stay. Such a recompense as this is sufficient to repay the toils of the longest life. Short of this, greatness is contemptible impotence. Before this, lofty prelates bow, and princes hide their diminished heads.

* How much his talents would have availed without *faith*, we have seen in the first volume of this work.

† He was wholly delivered from it, except as before stated. He was dead to the praise of men: he trampled it under his feet. This was a trait in his character, which, above all others, was most eminent.

"His zeal was not a transient blaze, but a steady and constant flame. The ardour of his spirit was neither damped by difficulty, nor subdued by age. This was ascribed by himself to the power of Divine grace; by the world, to enthusiasm. Be it what it will, it is what philosophers must envy, and infidels respect; it is that which gives energy to the soul, and without which there can be no greatness or heroism.

"Why should we condemn that in religion which we applaud in every other profession and pursuit? He had a vigour and elevation of mind, which nothing but the belief of the Divine favour and presence could inspire. This threw a lustre around his infirmities, changed his bed of sickness into a triumphal car, and made his exit resemble an *apotheosis*, rather than a dissolution.

"He was qualified to excel in every branch of literature: he was well versed in the learned tongues, in metaphysics, in oratory, in logic, in criticism, and every requisite of a Christian minister. His style was nervous, clear, and manly; his preaching was pathetic and persuasive; his journals artless and interesting; and his compositions and compilations to promote knowledge and piety, were almost innumerable.

"I do not say he was without faults, or above mistakes; but they were lost in the multitude of his excellencies and virtues.*

"To gain the admiration of an ignorant and superstitious age, requires only a little artifice and address; to stand the test of these times, when all pretensions to sanctity are stigmatized as hypocrisy, is a proof of genuine piety and real usefulness. His great object was to revive the obsolete doctrines and extinguished spirit of the Church of England; and they who are its friends cannot be his enemies. Yet for this he was treated as a fanatic and impostor, and exposed to every species of slander and persecution. Even bishops and dignitaries entered the lists against him; but he never declined the combat, and generally proved victorious. He appealed to the homilies, the articles, and the Scriptures, as vouchers for his doctrine; and they who could not decide upon the merits of the controversy, were witnesses of the effects of his labours; and they judged of the tree by its fruit.

* He has said of himself, in the language of faith:

O love, thou bottomless abyss,
My sins are swallowed up in thee!

It is true he did not succeed much in the higher walks of life; but that impeached his cause no more than it did the first planters of the gospel. However, if he had been capable of assuming vanity on that score, he might rank among his friends some persons of the first distinction, who would have done honour to any party. After surviving almost all his adversaries, and acquiring respect among those who were the most distant from his principles, he lived to see the plant he had reared spreading its branches far and wide, and inviting not only these kingdoms, but the Western world, to repose under its shade.—No people, since the first ages of Christianity, could boast a founder of such extensive talents and endowments. If he had been a candidate for literary fame, he might have succeeded to his utmost wishes; but he sought not the praise of man; he regarded learning only as the instrument of usefulness. The great purpose of his life was doing good. For this he relinquished all honour and preferment; to this he dedicated all the powers of body and mind; at all times and in all places, in season and out of season, by gentleness, by terror, by argument, by persuasion, by reason, by interest, by every motive and every inducement, he strove with unwearied assiduity to turn men from the error of their ways, and awaken them to virtue and religion. To the bed of sickness, or the couch of prosperity; to the prison, the hospital, the house of mourning, or the house of feasting; wherever there was a friend to serve, or a soul to save; he readily repaired to administer assistance or advice, reproof or consolation. He thought no office too humiliating, no condescension too low, no undertaking too arduous, to reclaim the meanest of God's offspring. The souls of all men were equally precious in his sight, and the value of an immortal creature beyond all estimation. He penetrated the abodes of wretchedness and ignorance to rescue the profligate from perdition. He communicated the light of life to those who 'sat in darkness and the shadow of death.' He changed the outcasts of society into useful members; civilized even savages; and filled those lips with prayer and praise that had been accustomed only to oaths and imprecations. But as the strongest religious impressions are apt to become languid, without discipline and practice, he divided his people into classes and bands, according to their attainments. He appointed frequent meetings for prayer and conversation, where they gave an

account of their experience, their hopes and fears, their joys and troubles; by which means they were united to each other, and to their common profession. They became sentinels upon each other's conduct, and securities for each other's character. Thus the seeds he sowed sprang up and flourished, bearing the rich fruits of every grace and virtue. Thus he governed and preserved his numerous societies, watching their improvement with a paternal care, and encouraging them to be faithful to the end.

"But I will not attempt to draw his full character, nor to estimate the extent of his labours and services. They will be best known when he shall finally deliver up his commission into the hands of his great Master."

I shall conclude this part of the review with the following beautiful picture of our honoured father, drawn by his friend Mr Knox, whom I have already mentioned. I the more willingly present it to my readers, as it confirms some particulars which I have related, and happily expresses others which I have omitted.

"Very lately* I had an opportunity, for some days together, of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavoured to consider him, not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philosopher; and I must declare, every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw! The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance; every look showed how fully he enjoyed

The gay remembrance of a life well spent.

Wherever he went he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company; and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at a loss whether to admire most his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourses. No applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful.

* In the year 1789

like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'May my latter end be like his!'

"But I find myself unequal to the task of delineating such a character. What I have said may to some appear as panegyric; but there are numbers, and those of taste and discernment too, who can bear witness to the truth, though by no means to the perfectness, of the sketch I have attempted. With such I have been frequently in his company; and every one of them, I am persuaded, would subscribe to all I have said. For my own part, I never was so happy as while with him, and scarcely ever felt more poignant regret than at parting from him; for well I knew,

'I ne'er should look upon his like again!'

It was a sage remark of a Heathen, "Count no man happy till you know his end." With the gospel of God our Saviour before us, we may nevertheless infer, that to begin well affords the highest prospect of a happy termination. Mr. Wesley took very high ground when in early youth, as he informs us,* he resolved to dedicate all his life to God; all his thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that every part of his life, (not some only,) must either be a sacrifice to God, or to himself,—that is, in effect, to the devil. How strange must such a character appear to the world! Yet who can deny, that wherever it is found, it is the greatest under the sun? How truly great is he, who, in such a world as this, 'lives not according to the desires of men, but to the will of God!' And how perfectly *rational* is such a determination! Can any man be truly accounted wise who lives not for eternity? Or is any man so great a fool as he who fools away his soul?

We have considered *that whole life;* we have traced it from infancy to the grave; long protracted, and astonishingly filled up; and may we not take, without fear, as strong ground on our part, and ask where is the deviation from the path so prescribed? Where is the period in which he was left to himself, or in which we have seen him an unfaithful servant? His enemies themselves being the judges, no blot remains upon his moral character; and in any attempts which they have made to lessen him in the esteem of men, they have been obliged to disobey the precept of our Lord, (Matt. vii, 1,) 'Judge not, that ye be not judged;' and to disregard what he allows in the same chapter, viz., 'By their

* See vol. i, page 136.

fruits you shall know them.' They have been thus obliged to *judge his spirit*, and to ascribe *motives* to such labours, privations, and sufferings, as are utterly at variance not only with Christian charity, but with reason and philosophy.

Some writers, who could think deeply and write well on other subjects, have gravitated when speaking of Mr. Wesley, and have adopted the most common and uncultivated notions. They seem not to have been able to account for such exertions, so long continued, upon any higher principle than the gentleman in Ireland, that listened politely to a lady, who rather disturbed the hilarity of a large company by speaking of the great labours of Mr. Wesley, (then travelling through the kingdom,) and was concluding with a warm opinion of his disinterestedness; but he could hold no longer. "Dear madam," said he, "you spoil all! You would make him out a fool. We all know, Mr. Wesley is a great man,—a gentleman, a scholar, a philanthropist,—a very great man. But, depend upon it, he knows what he is about. Wait and see. *Disinterestedness!* No, madam; you may be certain, he is no such fool."—The company seemed to acquiesce in this sage remark. The gentleman was one of those who know the world.

We have waited the great teacher—death, and we have seen the 'fool for Christ's sake' finish his course. We have seen the consolations of God rest upon his dying servant, and giving him anticipations of glory, who left not behind him what would defray the expenses of his very plain funeral!

> His God supports him in his final hour!
> His final hour brings glory to his God!

But these anticipations of glory—can these be explained away? We suppose, the attempt might be made by the ignorant, or the most careless minds. Alas! a learned and philosophical man, and who seemed to have a real respect for religion, after reading the twopenny tract, giving an account of Mr. Wesley's happy death, exclaimed to the person who put that tract into his hand, "Well, this is the most astonishing instance that ever I knew of the power of habit! Here is a man who has been threescore years praying, preaching, and singing psalms, and, behold! he thinks of nothing else when he is dying!"—*Risum teneatis, amici?* No, *my friends; we must not laugh*, but rather weep and say, Poor human nature! Poor, indeed, in its most imposing forms!

We have seen the struggles of this servant of God against the corruptions of his nature, else we should not have credited the victory which he obtained; and, perhaps, we should have seen them more largely detailed, if we had all his Journals. Mrs. Wesley carried off a considerable part of them.—'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' If we deny the disease the remedy cannot be applied. The same may be said of the people raised up by his labours. The world find some relief in crying out for a spotless church. They think that they are wise in rejecting any other. They may see, if they please, such a church, in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. ii and iv. But we have never seen it since that day. Yet, 'the gates of hell have not prevailed. Those who believe, and are thus conformed to the Son of God,' are still saved according to that standard. It would be very delightful to have them *all* thus 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;' and that 'great grace should rest upon them all.' But it is impossible that even such a church should continue to have *only* such members: for those, whose 'faith thus worketh by love,' must strive to save others; and, as soon as any have "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," they must receive them, and bear with all their ignorance, obstinacy, unbelief of heart, worldly mindedness, and evil tempers; and never thrust them out till it is plainly seen, that they have *turned back to perdition*.

Here is the great, the divine work of a minister of Christ! And, hence, we see the absolute necessity of *Christian discipline*. "The soul and the body," said one of the fathers, "make a man. The *spirit* and the *discipline* make a Christian." There are times of pulling down, and there are times of building up. Mr. Wesley was appointed to pull down ungodly formality, and to found THE FAITH; but Christian discipline must preserve it. Without this, we realize the old saying, "Like priest, like people!" How great the duty, how awful the responsibility, of a minister of Christ!

The people of God 'have fellowship one with another:' There can be no discipline where there is no such fellowship. What a butt for the ridicule, and even for the invectives, of the world, has the fellowship of the Methodists been! Yet, there is no church, that has any pretension to be called Scriptural, that

has not attempted something of the kind, or lamented the wan of it. Hence, "Christian congregations," as Mr. Wesley ob serves, in his letter to Mr. Perronet, "are a mere rope o sand." The serious reader will see the necessity of the mem bers of a Christian church having this mutual help, that 'reproof edification, and correction in righteousness,' may be adminis tered to all: that 'speaking the truth in love, we may grow u into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ;' fron whom 'the whole body, joined together, and compacted b that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectua working in the measure of every member, maketh an increas of the body, to the edifying of itself in love.'

The Reverend William Jewett, in his "*Christian Researche in the Mediterranean*," published and recommended by th Church Missionary Society, has some excellent thoughts appli cable to this subject.

"When" says that pious and laborious minister, "we com into these countries, [the remains of the Greek empire in Eu rope,] we are forcibly led by what we see, and often by what w hear, to reconsider matters; which, at home, we took for esta blished opinions. This should be done with candour, humility and a patient spirit; otherwise, we cannot expect, that the Spiri of God should lead to that 'wisdom which is from above,—firs pure, then peaceable.' There is no extreme of rigid bigotr on the one hand, or of lax and undisciplined liberty of though on the other, into which Satan is not permitted to beguil speculative, curious, secular, and factious spirits: see Ephes iv, 14; while the promise, in the words of the Psalmist, is 'The meek he will guide in judgment: the meek will he teacl his way.'

"You ask me, What is your opinion of the origin of auricula confession, which the Greek church practises? Is it not an ac of great humility? Is it not commanded by our Saviour, and hi apostle James, in this sense?—In the primitive times of th Christian church, when the members of it were few in number united one to another by the common bonds of affection within and sufferings without, the sin of one individual was sensibly fel as a matter of pain and scandal to all. Confession and som kind of penance were then required in the presence of the whol body of the particular church where the offence occurred

Traces of this appear in the Corinthian church: see 1 Cor. v; 2 Cor. ii and vii. This kind of discipline is alluded to in the preface to the commination-service of the Church of England; and where the members of a church are, indeed, in a spiritual manner, 'knit together in love,' such discipline appears truly wholesome.

"It was in the fifth century that, on account of the weakness and corruption of the church, Pope Leo Magnus gave permission to disuse the practice of public confession, and to confess to one priest; of so late a date appears to be the *origin* of auricular confession, which was afterwards made a sacrament! By what strains upon texts of Scripture attempts have been made to support these tenets, I need not here explain.

"The celebrated passage in St. James's Epistle, ch. v, 16, seems to me to afford no support whatever to auricular confession, considered as a system. 'Confess your faults one to another' implies *mutual* confession. But this auricular system makes confession flow all one way. Mutual confession implies that the persons among whom it is performed, are 'like-minded' respecting the subject of sin,—its real nature,—its hatefulness,—its burden. In some situations, a man [thus impressed] may be alone. This duty, in such a case ceases, in the very nature of things.

"With regard to the benefit of this practice, it may be viewed in the following lights:—1. It gives a taste of the loathsomeness of sin. If confession of it to our fellow sinners be so bitter, what must its nature be in the sight of a holy God?—2. It [confession] may operate in making useful the mischief which sin does to society.—3. Confession, accompanied with mutual prayer, has a special promise. (James v, 16.)—Another benefit is that of godly counsel, [suited] to the case of the sinner, together with the application of the promises, through Christ."

Such is the confession in a well regulated church, consisting of those who have *believed the word*,—who *desire to flee from the wrath to come*, and *to be saved from their sins*. Such a church or society is that established by Mr. Wesley.

Mr. Wesley informed me, that some years after the commencement of this *work of God*, a pious minister of the Church of England, who admired the discipline of the Methodists, thought he would try to institute something similar to it in his parish.

He accordingly convened the principal inhabitants; and, after laying his views and fears before them, proposed that they should thus meet together, and advise and pray for one another. The parishioners, who had come together with some fear lest the meeting called should be concerning something that might affect their temporal interests, heard the proposal with not a little surprise; and the well meaning pastor was obliged to dismiss them without obtaining a promise of compliance from any one of the assembly.

Some time after, meeting with one of our society whom he knew, he expressed his painful disappointment, and asked with much feeling, "O! where did Mr. Wesley find such a people, who are thus willing to act as he advises?"—"You are mistaken, sir," said his friend; "Mr. Wesley did not find them: he made them, or rather God by him. You must do the same. You must preach as he does. You must show them their true condition, and their danger of eternal perdition. Those who believe your word will receive every Scriptural advice you may be disposed to give them."

Mr. Jowett's statement will satisfy every reader who desires to know the mind of the Lord concerning his church, that Christian discipline is *essential* to it. But will any submit to it who do not come 'under the law to Christ?' Legal coercion, whether Papal or Protestant, is out of the question with every Bible Christian. The true mark, therefore, of a church of Christ is, the members having this willing fellowship one with another,—all being 'under the law to Christ,' as a rule of life, both personal and collective; and the discipline necessary to this, being executed in love, and without respect of persons.

But a higher and more intimate fellowship belongs to those who have *like precious faith*,—the *one true faith* of the gospel, and which is eminently 'the gift of God.' As all who receive this are devoted not only in life, but in heart; so they feel what that high apostolic precept means: 'Having purified your souls, by obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with pure hearts fervently.' This love is founded on 'the love of God,' which comes only by faith. 'We love him,' says St. John, 'because he first loved us.' This unfeigned love issues in a confidence which the world knows not of. Our Lord's intercessory prayer, (John xvii, 20, 21,)

'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,' has this high consummation of the life of faith in view. The *world* will never truly believe till they see this love, and consequently this *oneness*.

Mr. Wesley, as he felt the power of this faith and love, so he discerned it in others. Accordingly, he appointed that higher mean of this sacred fellowship, which is called "meeting in band." Where this faith is not found, this mean cannot be used to any spiritual profit. Where the faith is given, this help will be found edifying beyond all calculation: and, from the experience which I have had in the work of God, I most sincerely doubt, if any believer ever knew, and yet *neglected* this precious help, without the loss of the *first love* (Revelations ii, 4,) being the consequence. Unless this love be recovered, (verse 5,) 'perfect love,' the great preparation for the day of judgment (1 John iv, 17,) cannot be attained. We need not wonder, therefore, at so many that once run well, having become as 'salt without savour.'

Those who lived in the enjoyment of this faith, Mr. Wesley observes in his letter to Mr. Perronet, already mentioned, "had still to 'wrestle both with flesh and blood, and with principalities and powers;' so that temptations were on every side; and often temptations of such a kind as they knew not how to speak of in a class; in which persons of every kind, young and old, men and women, met together."

"These, therefore," he observes, "wanted some means of closer union: they wanted to pour out their hearts without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still 'easily beset' them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them: and they were the more desirous of this, when they observed it was the express advice of an inspired writer, 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.'

"In compliance with their desire, I divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and the married or single women, together. The rules of these bands, (i. e. little companies,—so that old English word signifies,) run thus:—that they were to speak each in order, freely and plainly, the true state of their souls; with the faults of which they are conscious, in thought, word, or deed; and the temptations they have felt

since the last meeting. The leader of the band was to speak *his* own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations."

The dignified author of "The Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists compared," with his usual ingenuity, terms this fellowship of believers "a private confession;" and cries out, no doubt with holy indignation, "What a scene is hereby disclosed! What a *filthy jakes* opened, when the most searching questions are answered without reserve!"—"Hold, sir," says Mr. Wesley in his reply, "unless you are answering for yourself. This undoubtedly you have a right to do. You can tell best what is in your own heart; and I cannot deny what you say. It may be a very *filthy jakes* for aught I know. But pray do not measure others by yourself. The hearts of believers are 'purified through faith.' When these open their hearts to each other, there is no such scene disclosed. Yet temptations to pride or desire, of various kinds; to self-will; to unbelief, in many instances, they often feel in themselves, (whether they give any place to them or no,) and occasionally disclose to their brethren."

Concerning the *filthy jakes* his lordship seems to have been a competent judge: and so far he was *sound in the faith.* We may well believe, that he subscribed, *ex animo*, to the ninth article of the church, viz., *of original or birth sin;* and that, "in every person born into the world," this *filthy jakes* "deserves God's wrath and damnation." But how to be delivered from it, appears from his whole book to have been a difficulty with the worthy bishop. Would he say with Horace, (who had some notion of *the jakes*, according to his well known saying, *Nemo vitiis sine nascitur,**) that "length of time, the advice of friends, and my own reason, will effect a cure?" This might do with Jupiter, who seems to have been a god after the poet's own heart. But, could the bishop believe that this process, even if the 'Father of mercies' should grant to him length of days, salutary advice, and the best rational powers, with all the rites of the church assisting, would 'conform him to the image of the Son of God?' But we may hope, he considered the subject more maturely during the days graciously afforded him. I think we may thus hope; for his mind seems to have been much changed respecting Mr.

* No man is *born* without vicious propensities.

Wesley. In one of his visits to Exeter, several years after, the bishop invited him to dine at the palace, where, in the presence of several of his clergy, he treated him with the greatest attention and respect.

Perhaps he also thought more seriously of those high descriptions of the life of faith, which he often read in the communion service: that "those who spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, *dwell in Christ, and Christ in them: that they are one with Christ, and Christ with them!*" He might perhaps also consider what the church says of "the *godly* consideration of our election in Christ," as believers, "who are called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season: they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity. That such as thus feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things, as it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, so it doth fervently kindle their love towards God. Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture. And, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God."

Perhaps this admirable conclusion, so decisive of the whole doctrine laid down in the seventeenth article, might have led the bishop to a more diligent study of his Bible: and it is not impossible that he might imbibe some fear, lest the poetical account of his *work*, by my friend Mr. Roberts,* was conclusive against him.

He might thus be prepared to hear the church, speaking by its most pious and learned ministers. He would see what they say concerning confession, notwithstanding all their zeal against the Church of Rome.—In the homily on repentance, it is said, "We ought to confess our weakness and infirmities," (the infirmity of our faith in this conflict, and our need of being made 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,') "to the

* See the preface, page 14.

end that, knowing each other's frailness, we may the more earnestly pray together to Almighty God, our heavenly Father, that he will vouchsafe to pardon us our infirmities, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake."

The excellent Bishop Taylor might also have helped him to discover his grievous error and fault, in thus ridiculing before an ungodly world, one of the most blessed means of combating, and being cleansed from, that *filthy jakes* of human corruption. That pious prelate not only enjoins the practice, but directs, that it should be much more explicit than the rules of the bands, drawn up by Mr. Wesley, require.—In the bishop's edifying book of *Holy Living*, (chap. 2, sect. 4,) he says, "To the same purpose it is of great use, that he who would preserve his humility should choose some spiritual person," (how much better if it were five or six, the usual number of the band!) "to whom he shall oblige himself to discover his very thoughts and fancies, every act of his, and all his intercourse with others, in which there is danger; that, by such an openness of spirit, he may expose every blast of vain-glory, every idle thought, to be chastened and lessoned by the rod of spiritual discipline; and he that shall find himself tied to confess every proud thought, every vanity of his spirit, will also perceive that they must not dwell with him, nor find any kindness from him."

Mr. Wesley used to say of the Methodist societies, alluding to St. Paul's account of the apostolic church, (Ephes. iv,) "The classes are the sinews; the bands are the nerves." The *solid parts* of the body seem unimpaired; and (by our trustees knowing their high duty and sacred responsibility) to have acquired greater solidity. Our sinews seem also to have increased in strength; and all are zealous to do good to all men; but our nervous system seems to be much weakened. Life is not transmitted as it used to be; and who can undertake for this? We can do much towards 'lengthening our cords and strengthening our stakes;' but who can repair the waste of *spiritual life?* When Mr. Wesley found any society in a declining state, he usually noted in his journal, as a prominent cause, that "the bands had crumbled to pieces." Being impressed with this, he at one time sent a circular letter to all the preachers, declaring, that in his next tour he would visit only those places where there were bands: adding, "for they only are Methodist societies."

This roused many to remember the happy times of mutual aid, whereby they were strengthened to "cast the world and flesh behind,"—'to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on to perfection.' He had comfort in meeting those who thus set out afresh, and rejoiced in the appearance of renewed life and vigour.

It may be thought that Mr. Wesley's declaration, that where there are no bands there is no true Methodism, is only an instance of his usual strong way of speaking; but it is a sober truth. If the reader will turn to vol. i, page 311, he will find that the bands were the first in order in the Methodist fellowship. When the Lord afterwards thrust out his servants 'into the highways and hedges,' and thus gathered together *the halt and the blind*, who 'desired to be made whole,' the classes were established, not only to teach, but to inquire and examine if the people walked according to the gospel. (vol. i, page 455.) When any 'knew the Lord,' (in the only way in which a sinner can know him,) as 'being merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembering their sins no more,' then the *bands* were appointed to keep up the original design, that those who thus believed might be 'cleansed from all unrighteousness.'

Now, if those who thus 'come to the knowledge of the truth' will still be found *only* among the catechumens, can we wonder if many should 'lose the things which they have wrought, and not receive a full reward?' Or ought we to be surprised if they should be found, like some in the days of the apostle, 'ever learning, yet never coming to the knowledge,' or the enjoyment, 'of the truth?' Or if 'they should need to be taught again the first principles of the oracles of God:' and who can effectually help them, if they should be thus content to walk in a circle, and never 'press to the mark of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus?'

Yet what an invaluable blessing have the classes been to the Methodist societies! By this a hedge is formed about those who begin to 'inquire their way to Zion,' and a fellowship obtained, that greatly helps to preserve them from turning back to the ungodly fellowship of the world. What a defence has it provided for those who 'have not yet root in themselves,' and who might otherwise become a prey to those who inculcate the pernicious principles of modern infidelity! We have seen its

salutary effects for many years. Could the ploughshare of destruction have passed through the continent, and have made it 'a field of blood,' if 'the truth as it is in Jesus' had been *taught*, and if the discipline of the Lord had preserved those who believed it?

When the almost prophetic voice, contained in that wonderful publication, *King's Morsels of Criticism*, came forth in the year 1788, the year before the French revolution broke out,—and which was so strikingly fulfilled in that 'abomination of desolation' wherewith the Lord visited the unfaithful professors of his holy and peaceful religion,—could any thing but true Christianity, both in its doctrine and discipline, have withstood the threatening ruin? Commenting on the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, the twenty-ninth verse, that extraordinary writer says, "If the words are spoken emblematically, then the images made use of are such as are well known to predict (consistently with their constant use in many other parts of prophecy,) a great destruction, and almost annihilation, of many of those lawful powers that at present rule on the earth, however beneficial any of them may be to the world; and a dreadful lessening of the dignity and splendour of all greatness, and a subversion of all good order and of civil government; than which nothing can be expected more formidable.

"Nevertheless, this conclusion is only too consistent with a similar intimation given to us in the book of Revelation, concerning the times immediately preceding the coming of our Lord. For therein we are informed, (Rev. xvi, 21,) that 'a great hail, every hailstone about the weight of a talent, falleth out of heaven upon the men; and the men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.'

"Dreadful, indeed, must be a time, (if such a one is to come,) when men are let loose upon each other, possessed of all their present artificial improvements and advantages; but unrestrained either by law or principle; scorning the admonitions and authority of those who ought to maintain justice; and assisted by the more rude and barbarous parts of the world, whom they may find too ready to increase the universal uproar."

What a picture is here given us of what really happened in that awful misrule, on account of which Europe smarts to this day! Can those who may be disposed to dispute the critical propriety

of the commentary, deny the awful fulfilment? Now, what preserved our nation in that day of 'rebuke and blasphemy?' That the Lord had, in his gracious providence, given us much advantage by the revolution of 1688, by which the nation was delivered from popery and arbitrary power, just one hundred years before, I joyfully grant. But if our *population* had been found like that in France, or even like what it was in 1738, (see vol. i, pages 356, 357,) could even our admirable constitution have saved us? What our great poet says of the tempestuous waves, may be said of *the madness of the people*,—

> What care these roarers for the name of king?

But the roarings were checked, or a bulwark raised against them, not by the nobility or gentry,—(*they* were the object of their fury, and could have no more prevailed in England than they did in France:) no; but by those of their own tribes; the men of their own sphere and station, who were converted to God; the men now become religious; many of whom 'had run with those who remained ungodly to the same excess of riot,' but whose blasphemies were now turned to praise! Had it not been for the labours of these men of God, who thus dared to go among this ungodly mass,—the uninformed, ungovernable mass of mankind; and who, at the peril of their lives, and to the great displeasure of those who ought to have known better, called these sons of violence and disorder to 'be wise, and remember their latter end;' who cried to those *prodigals*, even in their own haunts, and invited them 'to return to their Father's house;' promising them, with an authority and a love that only God could give, 'the kiss of peace,' and 'the robe of righteousness:'—had it not been for these labourers, this favoured land might also have been, years ago, a field of blood! Religion, and religion alone, can save any land from destruction. 'The nation that will not serve THEE shall perish!' And we may fear, lest 'his wrath should not be turned away,' but 'that he will again visit for these things.'

That the fellowship of those who 'are thus the called in Christ Jesus,' is of vital importance to the great design of God in giving his Son, can admit of no doubt in the mind of those who know that calling; and that without it Christian discipline cannot be maintained, long experience has abundantly proved

To this discipline we are, under God, (and it was also *his* work,) indebted at this day for the preservation of our original principles and the moral health of our people. What else could have preserved us from the overflowing scourge which threatened all that was venerable in civil society? When the assumption of *naked rights* in this land seemed to threaten us with a return to savage life!—when the Divine command, 'Thou shalt not covet,' seemed repealed by acclamation!—when the multitude seemed to behold a usurper in every man who was richer than themselves; our discipline, founded on the fellowship which the Scriptures show to be essential to a church of Christ, formed a hedge and a bulwark against these deceitful pretensions,—this fraternity of hell, the work of the old liar and murderer. If the same discipline were found among all who profess the religion of Christ, what blessed effects would follow, not only in our population at home, but in distant lands, now so pressingly invited to return to God, who 'has given to his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.'

We make no unscriptural pretensions. We know no promise or declaration that confers infallibility on even the *purest* church, or takes away responsibility from the children of men. 'It must needs be that offences should come;' such is the weakness, corruption, and perverseness of man; nor do we know any remedy for it, but in fearlessly and constantly 'preaching the word,' and by wholesome Christian discipline preserving those who are brought to God by it. We have been thus preserved as the visible fruits and seals of the apostolic labours of those men of God who now 'rest in him:' and we may humbly hope that we shall be preserved and increase till 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD.'

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING

"LETTERS BETWEEN THE REV. * * * * * * * *,

" Who passes by the name of John Smith,

"AND THE REV. JOHN WESLEY."

NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

THE REV * * * * * * * *,

WHO PASSES BY THE NAME OF JOHN SMITH,

AND

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.*

LETTER I.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

REVEREND SIR, *May*, 1745.

The labouring to bring all the world to solid, inward, vital religion, is a work so truly Christian and laudable, that I shall ever highly esteem those who attempt this great work, even though they should appear to me to be under some errors in doctrine, some mistakes in their conduct, and some excess in their zeal. You may expect therefore in me a candid adversary, a contender for truth and not for victory: one who would be glad to convince you of any error which he apprehends himself to have discovered in you, but who will be abundantly more glad to be convinced of errors in himself. Now the best way to enable you to set me right, wherever I may be wrong, will be by pointing out to you what I have to object to those works of yours which have fallen into my hands: and for order sake I shall reduce my objections to matter of Doctrine, to matter of Phraseology, and to matter of Fact.

1. As to matter of Doctrine, I shall choose to express what I take to be your doctrine in my own words rather than in your words, that you may the more readily perceive whether I at any time mistake you. You seem then to me to contend with great earnestness for the following system, viz., That faith (instead of being a rational assent and moral virtue, for the attainment of which men ought to yield the utmost attention and industry) is altogether a divine and supernatural illapse from Heaven—the immediate gift of God—the mere work of Omnipotence, given instantaneously and arbitrarily, not with any

* See p. 79.

regard to the fitness of the recipient, but the absolute will of the Donor: that the moment this faith is received, the recipient's pardon is signed in heaven, or he is justified. This pardon or justification is immediately notified to him by the Holy Ghost, and that (not by his imperceptibly working a godly assurance, but) by such a perceptible, such a glaring attestation, as is as easily discernible from the dictates of reason or suggestions of fancy, as light is discernible from darkness. Upon this perceptible and infallible notification, the recipient is saved, (i. e. as you explain yourself, is sanctified,) he has immediately the mind and the power to walk as Christ walked, and is become perfect: he has a perfection indeed admitting of degrees, yet such a perfection that he cannot sin. Thus he is in a moment regenerate, upon the first sowing of the seed of faith, which, you say, you cannot conceive to be other than instantaneous, whether you consider experience, or the word of God, or the very nature of the thing.

Now so various are men's understandings, or so unenlightened am I still as to spiritual affairs, that it appears quite manifest to me that experience, the word of God, and the nature of the thing, plainly evince the exact contrary.—As to my own experience, my parents and instructers, from my first infancy, carefully instilled into me such an amiable idea of God, that I cannot remember any time when I had *no more love of God than a stone:* consequently I cannot go so far back as the time 'when God first lifted up the light of his countenance upon me;' nor the day of my *eating butter and honey*, of *soaring upon eagles' wings*, or of *riding upon the sky*. These (I had like to have said *enthusiastic;* but I would willingly avoid all offensive words, these) rapturous expressions may pass sometimes in poetry, but are too flighty, methinks, for plain prose: neither can I remember the exact day of *my espousals*, as you call it; but yet I am not so carnal a person as to have no perception of things spiritual. I have a taste for divine intercourse, a relish for the pleasures of devotion; so high a relish as to think all other pleasures low and insipid things, compared to those happy moments when we get disentangled from the world and lift our souls up unto the calm regions of heaven. I hope and believe myself to have as steady a faith in a pardoning God, as you can have; but my faith came by hearing—by hearing the word of God soberly and consistently explained, and not from any momentaneous illapse from Heaven. Thus stands my own experience.—Then, sir, if I appeal to the experience of all around me, they assure me that the case is the same with them; insomuch, that I am not acquainted with one pious person in the world whose experience (upon being consulted) is not flatly against you.

As to the word of God, let me observe to you, it is not the sound of

particular texts, but the general tenour of the whole, on which we are to frame doctrines. There are texts whose sounds may favour quite contrary doctrines. Thus St. John says in one place, 'Whosoever is born of God cannot sin;' in another, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:' now no doctrine of perfection or imperfection should be founded on the sound of either of these texts; but from both of them, and the whole tenour of Scripture, we are to collect the true Scripture doctrine. In like manner there are Scriptures which declare we are *saved by faith;* others, that we are *saved by hope;* others again, that we are *saved by repentance, obedience, holiness,* and many other principal *parts* of religion, which, by a common synecdoche of *pars pro toto,* are put for the *whole* of it; here again we are not to be carried away with the sound of particular texts, maintaining that we are saved by faith alone, or hope alone, or obedience alone; but we are to construe one text so as to be consistent with all the rest, and to make one complete body or system of religion. —Again, *faith* is said in Scripture to be *the gift of God,* and so *riches* are said to be *the gift of God;* and indeed every other good thing, whether spiritual or temporal, is said to descend from Him from whom every good and perfect gift cometh: but then whether they descend merely as an illapse from Heaven, or as God's blessing on human industry, this cannot be collected from the sound of these texts, (though ever so often, or ever so emphatically repeated,) but must be gathered from the general scope, drift, and tenour of Scripture.—Once more; if there be some texts which seem to favour God's arbitrary rule of mankind, and his dispensing his grace and favours promiscuously to the just and unjust, and without any regard to the fitness of the recipients; and if there be other texts which seem to favour the contrary doctrine of his dealing with his creatures according to their works, of his conferring grace and pardon on those who sinned through *ignorance and unbelief* preferably to more knowing and more audacious transgressors; then we must not hang upon the sound of either of these sort of texts, but pick out a sense at once consistent with both, and with the known attributes of Almighty God.—Lastly, if the human mind be sometimes termed *the candle of the Lord,* if in some places God's word is said to be *his lanthorn,* and in others, the Holy Ghost is represented as *the light of God;* then we must interpret all these places consistently, and walk by the joint light, as children of the light, without pretending prismatically to separate its rays, or dogmatically asserting which is which. We must not single out a few texts of Scripture of one particular cast or sound, and then call these "the word of God;" but from a careful attention to every part of the Sacred Volume, collect what is the general tenour and consistent

meaning of the whole. The whole thus soberly studied, and consistently interpreted, I call "the word of God;" and this word of God appears to me to be manifestly against you; it speaks of growth in grace, in faith, and in religious knowledge, as owing to the slow methods of instruction, not to momentaneous inspiration; it directs the gentle instilling the sacred science by long labour and pious industry, the advancing line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; it compares even God's part of the work to his slow and imperceptible produce of vegetables; that whilst one planteth and another watereth, it is God all the while who goes on giving the increase.

Then lastly, the nature of the thing (which is the third witness you appeal to) seems to testify as clearly against you as the former two. It is the nature of faith, to be a full and practical assent to truth; but such assent arises not momentaneously, but by slow steps of ratiocination; by attending to the evidence, weighing the objections, and solving the difficulties. In short, the experience of mankind—the general tenour of the word of God, and the nature of the thing, all, in my opinion, make evidently and flatly against you. If you shall answer, that this my opinion is not by me sufficiently supported and proved, I readily grant you that it is not, neither do I intend to enter further into the proof of it. The controversies of the last century occasioned such a thorough discussion of the Calvinistical points, as settled those debates to the satisfaction of most men of learning and piety: and if young persons of the present age, instead of too hastily entering on the teaching of others, would but first give themselves the trouble to make themselves thorough masters of the points then settled, we should not have seen many of those crudities attempted to be revived at this time of day. To those writings I therefore refer you: for my present intention is, not to collect a body of divinity from the general tenour of Scripture, a work much too long for this letter, on the one hand; nor yet to cap a few texts of a contrary sound to those produced by you,—a task too trifling and insignificant, on the other; but my whole meaning is this: to state the case fairly between you and your adversaries. You have appealed to men of reason and religion: I have read your Appeals, and I shall impartially give you my sentiments as to your conduct.

We are at present upon the article of doctrine. Now your doctrine of momentaneous illapse, &c., as above related, (without entering at present into the truth or falsehood of it,) is represented by your adversaries as having something of singularity in it, unsupported by Scripture, or the received doctrine of the Church of England; that these singularities are your most beloved opinions and favourite tenets.

more insisted upon by you than the general and uncontroverted truths of Christianity. This is their charge. Now what is your defence? I was all attention to learn how you would maintain these singularities, these beloved opinions and favourite tenets; but what was my surprise when I found you answering that you had no singularities at all; that your notions are—true religion is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; that these are your favourite tenets, and have been so for many years: so that, in short, instead of having any peculiar doctrines which distinguish you from other Christians, you seem to suggest, that you preach nothing but what is common to all mankind: for, say you, *Are not my doctrines yours too? Do you say that any man can be a true Christian without loving God and his neighbour?* So then, sir, it seems you teach nothing more singular than the love of God and man. Was it then for preaching this doctrine that the London clergy forbad you their pulpits? If so, I think you have had very hard usage. But if it be notorious, that you frequently insist on other beloved opinions, and on other controverted favourite tenets, then I fear your adversaries will think that you have given but a shuffling and evasive answer.

Nay, I think it will appear that you yourself were not fully satisfied with the answer, of no singularities, from the texts which you elsewhere quote, as carrying a sound in favour of your distinguishing singularities. But this is another objection which I have to make to your manner of treating your antagonists: you seem to think that you sufficiently answer your adversary, if you put together a number of naked Scriptures that sound in your favour. But please to remember, sir, that the question between you and them is not whether such words are Scripture, but whether (both parties admitting the words) the words are to be so or so interpreted. Should a Papist, in disputing with you, entrench himself in Scripture words; quote upon you 'This is my body;' insist upon it, that they were the words of Him who could not lie; and, in a declamatory way, undertake to prove all gainsayers to be infidels: I suppose you would tell him, that he was spending his zeal impertinently, for that you were as fully convinced as he, that the words were the words of Christ; but that the naked quotation of those words made nothing for his purpose, since the whole dispute between you was, not whether those words were Christ's, but whether those words of Christ were most truly and most agreeably to the whole tenour of Scripture interpreted by him in a literal, or by you in a figurative way. In like manner, if 'Sell all, and give to the poor,' be understood by Mr. Law as a precept directed to all Christians, and by you as limited to one particular person; then the naked quotation of those words of Scripture is

not gaining any ground at all, but leaves the difference between you just as it found it. Once more, if a Churchman and a Quaker both allow that all God's children are led by the Spirit of God; but if the Churchman maintains, that this leading is by the written word, and by the gentle and imperceptible influences of the Divine Spirit on the human mind; and the Quaker, on the other hand, insists, that we are to be led by sudden, instantaneous inspirations, and by such perceptible movements of the Spirit, as are as distinguishable from the dictates of reason, or suggestions of fancy, as light is from darkness; if this be the difference between them, this difference is in no sort adjusted by barely quoting, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God:' for both acknowledge this scripture, but differ as to their manner of interpreting it. Now, sir, you often appear to me as attempting to adjust controversies by a bare quotation of the controverted texts.

And as you thereby fail of proving your singularities to be consistent with Scripture, so I must add, in the next place, you fail likewise of showing them consistent with the received doctrines of the Church of England. When your adversaries tax you with differing from the Church, not as it was a little before the reformation, or as it was a little after the reformation, but as it is at this day: and when you profess great deference and veneration for the Church of England; you cannot naturally be supposed to mean, that much reverence was due to the Church, and its doctors and pastors, in the year 1545, and that in the year 1745 no reverence is due at all: if then, by the Church of England be meant (as ought to be meant) the present Church, I presume it will be no hard matter to show, that your doctrines differ widely from the doctrines of the Church. But here, perhaps, you will ask me, What then, does the present Church of England differ in doctrines from the Church at the time of the reformation? I answer, I assert no such thing: but were it so, the presumption would lay in favour of the modern Church; for it would be much more probable, that some truths might be brought to light, and some first hasty errors rectified upon the increase of learning, and growth of criticism, than that every thing should at once be brought to perfection, upon the first dawn of light into the regions of darkness and superstition, and that too amidst the sparks and heats of a warmly-agitated controversy. Bishop Jewel was a wise and good man, and so was Archbishop Sharp; now if it had so happened that there was some difference of doctrine between them, the reasonable presumption would have been in favour of the latter, who had abundantly the best means of being accurate. Whatever partiality you, as a subscribing clergyman, may have for ancient sermons, published

formerly under the name of homilies, others, free from all bias, must be allowed to judge quite impartially between the more ancient and more modern sermons, and to prefer those, whichever they be, which shall appear most consistent with the general tenour of Scripture. But I am not a going to examine which appear most so: we will suppose both the ancient and modern Reformed Church of *England*, under some variety of phrase, to teach one and the self-same doctrine. The catechism (phrase and all) is the doctrine both of the ancient and modern Church: now that teaches repentance, faith, and obedience, as conditions of salvation. "No," say you, "we are saved by faith alone." In order to maintain this, you first give us to understand, that you mean by the word *salvation*, what other people mean by the word *holiness*; and that you mean, by *faith alone*, faith preceded by *repentance*, and accompanied by *obedience*. Now, may not your adversaries reply in your own words, *Alas, what trifling is this, what a mere playing upon words!* Now, if you will explain yourself after this manner, nobody I think can have any difference with you, as to matter of doctrine, but the dispute between you will be reduced to matter of mere phraseology.

2. As to phraseology, every man is at liberty to use what phrases he likes best, provided he uses them according to their common acceptation, or else gives notice that he puts upon them a singular meaning of his own: if you choose to call that faith, which other people commonly note by the word grace, or to term that salvation, which every body else styles holiness, provided you give notice of this peculiar use of the words, we may make a tolerable shift to understand you, though, in my opinion, you would have done much better to have kept to the obvious and common sense. You may urge, perhaps, that your phraseology comes nearer to that of Scripture, and the original Reformed Church of England, and therefore is better than that in common use; now, though some question may be made as to the absolute truth of the antecedent, yet granting the antecedent, I deny the consequence. For that phraseology may be quite proper at some times, and on some occasions, which may become highly improper upon a change of circumstances. To judge therefore of your propriety as to this matter, we must look back to the time of the apostles, and the time of the reformation, and carefully consider what was the state of affairs, both at the time of the first spreading, and at the time of the late revival of the gospel. At the time of the first preaching of the gospel, both Jews and Gentiles were very negligent as to internal holiness: they made light of the laws of piety and morality, but laid great stress upon external rites, and certain atoning actions, such as sacrifices, washings, lustrations, and other expiatory

works, which, if they performed according to the due form of their respective religions, they doubted not but those works would render them acceptable to God, how free soever they made with the laws of morality and righteousness. The apostles therefore thought they could not express themselves too warmly against so wicked a persuasion, and often declare that we cannot be made righteous *by works* (by which they always meant, such outward works as were intended to commute for inward holiness) *but by faith in Christ*, (by which they as constantly meant, by becoming Christians both in principle and practice.) In like manner, at the time of the reformation, when Popery had corrupted Christianity, and made a religion most of all other calculated for promoting moral goodness, really to subvert it, by substituting in the place of true holiness, certain trifling tricks, such as endowments, penances, and pilgrimages, to which they gave the emphatical name of *good works*, as if nothing else were good in comparison of them; and to which they ascribed such merit, that a man might thereby not only merit heaven for himself, but have too such a surplusage of merit to spare, as might be laid up in the storehouse of the Church, to be sold out by the Pope to those who had no merit of their own;—when these foolish and wicked doctrines had made men look out for other means of recommending themselves to God, than by a faithful and holy life; our reformers attacked those tenets with a becoming warmth, teaching that such fopperies were far from being good works, and that our best works were far from meriting heaven; that we were not to be justified by such outward trumperies, or by believing in saints or angels, but by faith alone in Jesus Christ. If in the heat of the argument, some crude things had been vented, it would have been no more than what usually happens in strenuous oppositions; the main of their argument was certainly pious and right. But the strong phrases which the reformers made use of, to guard against the Popish doctrine of justification *by good works*, gave occasion to Antinomians to run into a worse doctrine, if possible, than the former, viz., That of being justified and saved *without good works*. Now, sir, supposing the ancient and modern Reformed Church of England always to have maintained one and the same uniform doctrine, still every sensible man must allow, that the phraseology which was proper to express this doctrine at the one time, would be highly improper at the other; and the modern Church is as much to be commended, for avoiding all phrases that might countenance Antinomianism, as the ancient Church was for avoiding those which favoured Popery; and, consequently, that if the dispute between you and your adversaries be reduced to matter of phraseology, they have greatly the advantage of you in point of propriety. But as things of this

nature are still liable to much altercation, I am for reducing this controversy to a much narrower compass, namely, to the third thing I at first proposed to object to, even one plain matter of fact.

3. If in fact, sir, you can work such signs and wonders as were worked by the apostles—if the Holy Ghost bears witness to your doctrines, as he did to theirs, by divers miracles, and visible supernatural gifts—if, I say, you can thus do the work of an apostle, you are, in my account, (notwithstanding what I might otherwise object to your doctrines or phrases,) entitled to the implicit faith which is due to one of that order. You relate of yourself many strange and wonderful things; but I will rest the whole affair upon this one fact, —your casting out devils. Now, sir, if one or two persons who appeared to be *lunatic*, and were actually *sore vext, and torn by the devil*, upon your praying God to bruise Satan under their feet, were instantly dispossessed of that evil spirit, *vehemently crying out*, "*He is gone, he is gone*," and straightway *filled with the Spirit of love, and a sound mind.* If they were so divinely enlightened, and made *so strong in the Lord*, as to acquire at once a *contempt* of all worldly things, and a temper quite unprovokable; if, I say, you prove this to be the fact, to the satisfaction of wise and good men, then I believe no wise and good man will oppose you any longer. Let me therefore rest it upon your conscience, either to prove this matter of fact, or to retract it. If, upon mature examination, it shall appear that *designing people* imposed upon you, or that hysterical women imposed upon themselves—acknowledge fairly that your zeal outran your wisdom—that your colourings are sometimes too strong, and your expressions too rapturous and glowing.

Having now freely told you what I take to be wrong in you, I shall readily and thankfully attend to whatever you shall point out as amiss in me. I am desirous to retract and amend whatever is wrong. To your general design of promoting true religion I am a hearty friend; nay, to your particular scheme and singularities I am no enemy: so far from it, that I should rejoice greatly to become your convert, and instead of living as I now do in hopes of salvation, I should be much better pleased to obtain certainty of it, by the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost. If I come not fully into your scheme, it is not for want of good will, but for want of evidence and conviction that it is true. I pray God to grant me all needful illumination: and I pray you to tell me what is still lacking on my part.

P. S.—As I live at a considerable distance from London, I have no convenience of a personal conference with you; but a letter will find me directed to "JOHN SMITH, at Mr. Richard Mead's, at the Golden Cross, in Cheapside."

LETTER II.

For Mr. John Smith.

SIR,

1. I was determined, from the time I received yours, to answer it as soon as I should have opportunity. But it was the longer delayed, because I could not persuade myself to write at all, till I had leisure to write fully. And this I hope to do now, though I know you not, no, not so much as your name. But I take it for granted you are a person that fears God, and that speaks the real sentiments of his heart. And on this supposition, I shall speak without any suspicion or reserve.

2. I am exceedingly obliged by the pains you have taken to point out to me what you think to be mistakes. It is a truly Christian attempt, an act of brotherly love, which I pray God to repay sevenfold into your bosom. Methinks I can scarce look upon such a person, on one who is "a contender for truth and not for victory," whatever opinion he may entertain of *me*, as any adversary at all. For what is friendship, if I am to account him my enemy who endeavours to open my eyes, or to amend my heart?

I. 3. You will give me leave (writing as a friend rather than a disputant) to invert the order of your objections, and to begin with the third, because I conceive it may be answered in fewest words. The substance of it is this: "If in fact you can work such signs and wonders as were wrought by the apostles, then you are entitled (notwithstanding what I might otherwise object) to the implicit faith due to one of that order."—A few lines after you cite a case related in the Third Journal, p. 88, and add, "If you prove this to be the fact, to the satisfaction of wise and good men, then I believe no wise and good man will oppose you any longer. Let me therefore rest it upon your conscience, either to prove this matter of fact, or to retract it. If upon mature examination it shall appear that designing people imposed upon you, or that hysterical women were imposed upon themselves, acknowledge your zeal outran your wisdom."

4. Surely I would. But what, if on such examination it shall appear that there was no imposition of either kind, (to be satisfied of which I waited three years before I told the story.) What, if it appear, by the only method which I can conceive, the deposition of three or four eye and ear witnesses, that the matter of fact was just as it is there related, so far as men can judge from their eyes and ears? will it fol-

low that I am entitled to demand the implicit faith which was due to an apostle? By no means. Nay, I know not that implicit faith was due to any or all of the apostles put together. They were to prove their assertions by the written word. You and I are to do the same. Without such proof I ought no more to have believed St. Peter himself, than St. Peter's (pretended) successor.

5. I conceive therefore this whole demand, common as it is, of proving our doctrine by miracles, proceeds from a double mistake, 1. A supposition that what we preach is not provable from Scripture: (for if it be, what need we farther witnesses? to the law and to the testimony!) 2. An imagination, that a doctrine not provable by Scripture, might nevertheless be proved by miracles. I believe not. I receive the written word as the whole and sole rule of my faith.

II. 6. Perhaps what you object to my phraseology, may be likewise answered in few words. I thoroughly agree that it is best to "use the most common words, and that in the most obvious sense:" and have been diligently labouring after this very thing for little less than twenty years. I am not conscious of using any uncommon word, or any word in an uncommon sense; but I cannot call those *uncommon words* which are the constant language of Holy Writ. These I purposely use; desiring always to express Scripture sense in Scripture phrase. And this I apprehend myself to do when I speak of *salvation* as a *present* thing. How often does our Lord himself do thus? How often his apostles? St. Paul particularly. Insomuch that I doubt whether we can find six texts in the New Testament, perhaps not three, where it is otherwise taken.

7. The term *faith* I likewise use in the Scriptural sense, meaning thereby *the evidence of things not seen.* And, that it is Scriptural, appears to me a sufficient defence of any way of speaking whatever. For however the propriety of those expressions may vary, which occur in the writings of men, I cannot but think those which are found in the Book of God will be equally proper in all ages. But let us look back, as you desire, to the age of the apostles. And if it appear that the state of religion now, is (according to your own representation of it) the same in substance as it was then, it will follow that the same expressions are just as proper now as they were in the apostolic age.

8. "At the time of the first preaching of the gospel (as you justly observe) both Jews and Gentiles were very negligent of *internal holiness*, but laid great stress on *external* rites, and certain actions, which if they performed according to the due forms of their respective religions, they doubted not but those works would render them acceptable to God. The apostles therefore thought they could not express themselves too warmly against so wicked a persuasion, and often

declare that we cannot be made righteous by works: (i. e. not by such outward works as were intended to commute for inward holiness,) but *by faith in Christ*, i. e. by becoming Christians both in principle and practice."

9. I have often thought the same thing, namely, that the apostles used the expression, *salvation by faith* (importing inward holiness by the knowledge of God) in direct opposition to the then common persuasion, of *salvation by works*, i. e. going to heaven by outward works, without any inward holiness at all.

10. And is not this persuasion as common now as it was in the time of the apostles? We must needs go out of the world, or we cannot doubt it. Does not every one of our churches (to speak a sad truth) afford us abundant instances of those who are as negligent of *internal* holiness, as either the Jews or ancient Gentiles were? And do not these at this day lay so great a stress on certain external rites, that if they perform them according to the due forms of their respective communities, they doubt not but those works will render them acceptable to God? You and I therefore cannot express ourselves too warmly against so wicked a persuasion; nor can we express ourselves against it in more proper terms than those the apostles used to that very end.

It cannot be denied that this apostolical language is also the language of our own Church. But I waive this. What is Scriptural in any church I hold fast: for the rest, I let it go.

III. 11. But the main point remains. You think the doctrines I hold are not founded on holy writ. Before we inquire into this, I would just touch on some parts of that abstract of them which you have given.

"Faith (instead of being a rational assent and moral virtue, for the attainment of which men ought to yield the utmost attention and industry) is altogether supernatural, and the immediate gift of God."—I believe, 1. That a rational assent to the truth of the Bible is one ingredient of Christian faith:—2. That Christian faith is a moral virtue in that sense wherein hope and charity are:—3. That men ought to yield the utmost attention and industry for the attainment of it;—and yet, 4. That this, as every Christian grace is properly supernatural, is an immediate gift of God, which he commonly gives in the use of such means as he hath ordained.

I believe it is generally given in an instant; but not *arbitrarily*, in your sense of the word; not without any regard to the fitness (I should say *the previous qualifications*) of the recipient.

12. "When a man is pardoned, it is immediately notified to him by the Holy Ghost, and that (not by his imperceptibly working a

godly assurance, but) by such attestation as is easily discernible from reason or fancy."

I do not deny that God imperceptibly works in some a gradually increasing assurance of his love. But I am equally certain he works in others a full assurance thereof in one moment. And I suppose, however this godly assurance be wrought, it is easily discernible from bare reason or fancy.

"Upon this infallible notification he is saved, is become perfect, so that he cannot commit sin."

I do not say this notification is *infallible* in that sense, that none believe they have it who indeed have it not: neither do I say that a man is perfect in love the moment he is born of God by faith. But even then I believe if he keepeth himself, he doth not commit (outward) sin.

13. "This first sowing of the first seed of faith, you cannot conceive to be other than instantaneous, (ordinarily,) whether you consider experience, or the word of God, or the very nature of the thing. Whereas all these appear to me to be against you. To begin with experience. I believe myself to have as steady a faith in a pardoning God as you can have. And yet I do not remember the exact day when it was first given."

Perhaps not. Yours may be another of those exempt cases which were allowed before.

But, "the experience" you say, "of all the pious persons you are acquainted with, is the very same with yours."—You will not be displeased with my speaking freely. How many truly pious persons are you so intimately acquainted with, as to be able to interrogate them on the subject? With twenty? With ten? If so, you are far happier than I was for many years at *Oxford*. You will naturally ask, With how many truly pious persons am I acquainted, on the other hand? I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not: I am acquainted with more than 1200 or 1300 persons, whom I believe *to be truly pious*, and not on slight grounds, and who have severally testified to me with their own mouths, that they *do know* the day when the love of God was first shed abroad in their hearts, and when his Spirit first witnessed with their spirits, that they were the children of God. Now, if you are determined to think all these liars or fools, this is no evidence to *you*: but to *me* it is strong evidence, who have for some years known the men and their communication.

14. As to the word of God, you well observe, "We are not to frame doctrines by the sound of particular texts, but the general tenour of Scripture, soberly studied and consistently interpreted." Touching the instances you give, I would just remark: 1. To *have*

sin, is one thing; to *commit* sin, is another.—2. In one particular text it is said, 'Ye are saved by hope;' perhaps in one more, (though I remember it not,) 'Ye are saved by repentance,' or 'holiness.' But the general tenour of Scripture, consistently interpreted, declares, 'We are saved by faith.'—3. Will either the general tenour of Scripture, or your own conscience, allow you to say that faith is the gift of God in no other or higher sense than riches are?—4. I entirely agree with you, that the children of light walk by the joint light of reason, Scripture, and the Holy Ghost.

"But the word of God appears to you to be manifestly against such an instantaneous giving of faith; because it speaks of growth in grace and faith as owing to the slow methods of instruction."—So do I. But that is not the question. We are speaking, not of the *progress*, but of the first *rise* of faith. "It directs the gentle instilling of faith, by long labour and pious industry."—Not the first instilling; and we speak not now of the *continuance* or *increase* of it. "It compares even God's part of the work to the slow produce of vegetables, that while one plants and another waters, it is God all the while who goes on giving the increase."—Very true. But the seed must first be sown before it can increase at all. Therefore all the texts which relate to the subsequent increase, are quite wide of the present question.

Perhaps your thinking "the nature of the thing to be so clearly against me," may arise from your not clearly apprehending it. That you do not, I gather from your own words: "It is the nature of faith to be a full and practical assent to truth."—Surely no. This definition does in no wise express the nature of Christian faith. Christian, saving faith, is a divine conviction of invisible things; a supernatural conviction of the things of God, with a filial confidence in his love. Now a man may have a full assent to the truth of the Bible, (probably attained by the slow steps you mention,) yea, an assent which has some influence on his practice, and yet not have one grain of this faith.

16. I should be glad to know to which writings in particular of the last age you would refer me for a thorough discussion of the Calvinistical points. I want to have those points fully settled; having seen so little yet wrote on the most important of them, with such clearness and strength as one would desire.

17. I think your following objections do not properly come under any of the preceding heads: "Your doctrine of momentaneous illapse, &c., is represented by your adversaries as singular and unscriptural; and that these singularities are your *most beloved* opinions and favourite tenets, *more insisted upon* by you than the general and uncontroverted truths of Christianity: this is their charge."—And so, I doubt, it will be to the end of the world:—for.

in spite of all I can say, they *will* represent one *circumstance* of my doctrine (so called) as the main *substance* of it. It nothing avails, that I declare again and again, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." I believe this love is given in a moment. But about this I contend not. Have this love, and it is enough. For this I will contend till my spirit returns to God. Whether I am singular or no, in thinking this love is instantaneously given, this is not my *most beloved opinion*. You greatly wrong me when you advance that charge. Nay, I *love* (strictly speaking) *no opinion* at all. I trample upon opinion, be it right or wrong. I want, I value, I preach, the love of God and man. These are my *favourite tenets* (if you will have the word) *more insisted* on by me, ten times over, both in preaching and writing, than any or all other subjects that ever were in the world.

18. You will observe, I do not say (and who is there that can?) that I have no singular opinion at all. But this I say, that in my general tenour of preaching, I teach nothing (as the substance of religion) more singular than the love of God and man: and it was for preaching this very doctrine (before I preached or knew salvation by faith) that several of the clergy forbade me their pulpits.

"But if it be notorious, that you are frequently insisting on controverted opinions." If it be, even this will not prove the charge, viz., "That those are my *most beloved* opinions, and more insisted upon by me than the uncontroverted truths of Christianity."

"No singularities," is not my answer. But that *no singularities* are my most beloved opinions; that *no singularities* are more, or near so much *insisted* on by me, as the general uncontroverted truths of Christianity.

19. "Another objection (you say) I have to make to your manner of treating your antagonists. You seem to think you sufficiently answer your adversary, if you put together a number of naked scriptures that sound in your favour. But remember, the question between you and them is not, whether such words are Scripture, but whether they are to be so interpreted."

You surprise me. I take your word; else I should never have imagined you had read over the latter Appeal: so great a part of which is employed in this very thing, in fighting my ground, inch by inch; in proving, not that such words are Scripture, but that they must be interpreted in the manner there set down.

20. One point more remains, which you express in these words: "When your adversaries tax you with differing from the Church, they cannot be supposed to charge you with differing from the Church as it was a little after the reformation, but as it is at this day. And when you profess great deference and veneration for the Church of

England, you cannot be supposed to profess it for the Church and its pastors in the year 1545, and not rather in the year 1745. If then by the Church of England be meant (as ought to be meant) the *present Church*, it will be no hard matter to show that your doctrines differ widely from the doctrines of the Church."

Well, how blind was I! I always supposed, till the very hour I read these words, that when I was charged with differing from the Church, I was charged with differing from the articles, or homilies. And for the compilers of these, I can sincerely profess great deference and veneration. But I cannot honestly profess any veneration at all for those pastors of the present age, who solemnly subscribe to those articles and homilies, which they do not believe in their hearts. Nay, I think, unless I differ from these men, (be they bishops, priests, or deacons,) just as widely as they do from those articles and homilies, I am no true Church of England man.

Agreeably to those ancient records, by Christian or justifying faith I always meant, faith preceded by repentance, and accompanied or followed by obedience. So I always preached; so I spoke and wrote. But my warm adversaries, from the very beginning, stopped their ears, cried out, "a heretic, a heretic," and so ran upon me at once.

21. But I let them alone: you are the person I want, and whom I have been seeking for many years. You have understanding to discern, and mildness to repeat (what would otherwise be) unpleasing truths. Smite me friendly and reprove me: it shall be a precious balm; it shall not break my head. I am deeply convinced, that I know nothing yet as I ought to know. Fourteen years ago, I said, (with Mr. Norris,) "I want heat more than light." But now I know not which I want most. Perhaps God will enlighten me by your words. O speak and spare not. At least you will have the thanks and prayers of

Your obedient and affectionate servant,

September 28, 1745. JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER III.

For the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

REVEREND SIR,

I heartily thank you for your very kind and very handsome letter; I have yielded it that attention which I think it justly deserves, and am now set down to give you my thoughts upon it. I shall first

most readily take notice of those things wherein I stand corrected, and am gone over to you; and next I shall, with some reluctance, proceed to those, in which we first seem misfortunately to differ.

1. First, I stand corrected as to my charging your singularities, "as your *most* beloved opinions, and *more* insisted on," &c.; I retract this comparative and superlative, and hope you will not think I *greatly wrong you*, when I charge you no higher, than with their being your *beloved* opinions *much* insisted on.

2. By saying that "you seem to think you sufficiently answer your adversary, if you put together a number of naked Scriptures that sound in your favour," I meant not to say that you do this *always*, but only *sometimes*; it was a fault in me to express this in such general terms, and without some such proper word of restriction.

3. In speaking of the ancient and modern Church of England, I was aware I should lay myself open to some such rebuke as that—*How blind was I!* &c. I was to blame therefore not to explain myself a little. I know that the written creeds, articles, &c., of a church, are commonly spoken of as the whole doctrine of such church; and it would be so, were human language so univocal as to admit of some one written form, liable to one single sense only; but as this is not the case, the doctrine of any church is really its creeds, articles, &c., as generally understood and interpreted by its living pastors. e. g. "The body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper:" here is a written form of the Church of England, generally understood and interpreted in 1345, as teaching transubstantiation; the very same written words are retained in 1545, but then generally understood and interpreted in a sounder sense. Now should the duke of Norfolk, in 1745, insist that he differed not from the doctrine of the Church of England because he abided by that written form, might I not fairly be allowed to tell him, "My lord, if by *the Church of England* be meant, as ought to be meant, the present Church, it will be no hard matter to show that your doctrines differ widely from the doctrines of the Church." The case will be just the same, though we go no farther back than 1545. If the written articles, &c., were then generally understood and interpreted in the Calvinistical sense; and [in] 1745 are generally understood and interpreted in the Arminian sense; then if Mr. Whitefield will at this time of day expound the 17th article in the old justly exploded sense, you may fairly be allowed to show (as you do) the blasphemous consequence of the old exploded sense, and might justly be allowed to tell him, "Sir, if this be your interpretation, it will be no hard matter to show that your doctrine differs widely from the doctrine of the present Church."

Indeed should you, through either zeal, or anger, go so much farther, as to tax one another with solemnly subscribing to those articles, &c., which you do not believe in your hearts, this would be going much too far; for you do each of you believe the written articles in your hearts, though each of you in a sense very different from the other. These articles of peace admit of this latitude; and the royal authority which enjoins them, forbids the cramping it, and speaks of both parties subscribing to the written words.—The disbelieving your sense, is not disbelieving the article; and therefore, notwithstanding the blasphemous consequences of Mr. Whitefield's sense of the 17th article, you still acknowledge him as a child of God. I hope then the pastors of the present age, bishops, priests, and deacons, for differing from you in the sense of the 13th article, are not to be hinted at as unbelievers in their hearts and children of the devil.

4. Again, I agree with you, that the written word is [now] the whole and sole rule of faith; and that no such implicit faith is due to an apostle or other worker of miracles, as that we should admit any thing for truth contrary to the written word: this, I suppose, is all you mean, by "putting the apostles upon proving their assertions from the written word:" what, from the written word before they had wrote it? No; but your intention must be, that the written word (i. e. the Old and New Testament, as we now have them complete) is such a perfect rule of faith, that though an apostle or an angel from heaven were to teach any thing contrary thereto, and work ever so many miracles in confirmation of his new doctrine, still we ought not to believe him: this is as true, as that God is true, and that he cannot contradict himself. But where there is no such contradiction, these miracles have their weight. Now I supposed you, not as teaching some doctrine manifestly contradicted by Scripture, but only as inferring something from thence, which, others think, cannot fairly be inferred. I am attending to the inferences of these various teachers, and am in some suspense which are the right ones. During this suspense, one of them gives out, that the Spirit of God gives visible attestations to his ministry by miraculous works, (for surely the casting out of devils may be called so, if any thing can.) Now if this shall appear to be no exaggerated account, but a real fact, am I not justified in saying that I will, on account of this attestation, assent to his set of Scripture inferences? In short, sir, you either did, or did not, cast out devils; if you did, I am still ready to be your disciple and follower, all the world over; if you did not, you ought to say so, and to own your error, in having related a *natural* fact in such high terms as unavoidably convey to the reader the idea of a *miraculous* one.

5. I agree too with you, that it is (generally) a sufficient defence of any way of speaking whatever, that it is Scriptural; but this admits of many restrictions and limitations: if, for instance, you relate a *melancholy person's amendment* in the Scripture terms of Christ's *miraculous healing demoniacs*, this the more Scriptural the terms, the more will it be misguiding: if low and common things are told in Scripture phrase, it becomes either cant or burlesque: if obsolete words are used familiarly, (as *earing* for *ploughing*,) the discourse grows unintelligible. If words that have shifted and changed their signification are used, (as *let*, not for *suffer*, but for its contrary *hinder*,) then what is said must appear strange and paradoxical; thus you would make your people start, should you say that all good souls but Christ's are left in hell till the day of judgment: if some of the apostles had a sort of *technical terms* peculiar to the controversies of those days, yet well understood by those to whom they wrote, it would be an odd kind of affectation to be familiarly using those terms, merely because they are Scriptural: St. Paul calls *Christianity* and *Judaism faith* and *works*, and sometimes *spirit* and *flesh;* yet if a man should say that *flesh* at present loses ground in *Spain*, and that *spirit* gains ground in *America*, he would but ill defend his singularity by urging that the terms are Scriptural; the case is the same with many others; salvation, justification, reprobation, predestination, and election. It is not therefore the merely being Scriptural that makes terms proper, but we must look back to the occasion of their use; and if the circumstances then and now are alike, then, and not otherwise, we may pronounce their use alike proper.

6. Well: you are willing to look thus back to the times of the apostles and reformers; and having so done, you ask, "Are not the same persuasions as common now as then?" No, by no means. The persuasion then was, that they might commute expiations or penances, and such like external works, *instead of* internal holiness. But does any Church of *England man* maintain any thing like this? Every wise Churchman uses external rites as *the means* of internal holiness; and the most ignorant and unwise among us, use them in no worse way than as *acts of goodness:* but as *commutations in the stead of holiness*, I never heard of one creature among us that professed to use them in so gross a way.

Pray, sir, do you know any people among us so grossly superstitious as to think that devotion might be put upon God *instead* of honesty? That three frauds might be committed for six *paternosters?* Or, that four sacraments might be taken in order to commit eight adulteries? It is true, *our churches (to speak a sad truth)* afford us abundant instances of those who are negligent of *internal holiness*,—

yes, of the external rites of holiness likewise; our times therefore are times of *profaneness*, which differ widely from times of *superstition*, and consequently the phraseology which might be proper for the one, must needs be highly improper for the other: so improper, that possibly the misapplied anti-superstition phrases have contributed to spread not only *Antinomianism*, but infidelity too into the bargain.

7. And now that we are upon phraseology, give me leave to observe to you, that the insisting too strongly even on Scripture metaphors, has something in it misguiding to the reader; at least it gives him a claim to your more ready pardon when he mistakes your sense. Thus the hanging so much on faith being the eye, the ear, the finger, the palate, &c., of the soul, inclines a reader to think that you mean something more than mere metaphor; and the vehemence of your style in general (a vehemence rather to be envied than condemned) has yet, as such, a tendency to run, if not the writer, at least the reader into mistakes! Thus when you asserted that faith is the gift of God, which he bestows—*not on such as are fit to be crowned with his blessings, but on the ungodly and unholy, on those who are fit only for everlasting destruction*;—I understand (whether by the fault of the writer or the reader I do not say) that this implied *arbitrarily*: you will pardon me however, that from those warm words I understood you so, till you now explain yourself to mean, that *it is not bestowed without any regard to the fitness or previous qualifications of the recipient.* In like manner, when you teach that the pardon of sins in heaven, or justification, is certified to the sinner on earth by the Holy Ghost, and that this certificate or *testimony is as easily discernible from the suggestions of reason or fancy, as light is discernible from darkness*—I understood this to amount to the *infallible* testimony of the Holy Ghost. But, it seems, these phrases do not amount to *infallible, in that sense that none* (by the wrong deductions of reason, or false suggestions of fancy) *believe they have it, who indeed have not.* In what sense then is it thus plainly discernible and infallible? Is it in this sense, that none (by wrong reasoning or false fancy) *who indeed have it, believe they have it not?* No, nor in this sense neither (witness the case of Mrs. Hannah Richardson, who, for above a year after this attestation of justification, continued almost in despair, fancying she should be damned.) Now, sir, in what sense is that attestation infallible and plainly discernible from fancy, which they who have not may fancy they have? and they who really have may fancy they have it not?

8. As to the experience of pious persons concerning the *progressive* or the *instantaneous* gift of faith, you ask me, (and I assure you without any offence,) *how many truly pious persons I am so intimately acquainted with, as to be able to interrogate them on the subject?* First,

I must answer, that the sentiments of many hundreds may be known from their preachings, writings, or conversations, without any interrogation at all. Next, if you lay an emphasis on the word *truly*, I must remind you that neither I nor they pretend to have inspected the justification roll in heaven, or to have received any supernatural or miraculous attestation on that head on earth. If then by "truly pious persons" you mean those who appear to be such to a reasonable Christian charity, I hope I may answer, that I have known *thousands* of such in the way I mention; if you have known your *ten thousands* in the other way, God forbid I should envy your numbers! No; would to God all the Lord's people were known to be pious in some way or other! Yet I cannot help suspecting that the experience of your *tens of thousands*, expressed in cool language, will amount to nothing supernatural or miraculous, indeed to no more than this, that they do remember the day, when hearing the love of God preached in a more impetuous and energetic manner than they ever heard before, they were more affected than they ever were before, so that this was the first time they ever so warmly felt the divine love shed abroad in their hearts, and the first time they so seriously attended to the witness of God's Spirit with their spirit that they are the children of God. Witness of God's spirit—how? by an audible voice from heaven, or any other supernatural or miraculous inspiration? No; but by his attestation in the Holy Scriptures.—True believers are the children of God —There is the witness of His Spirit. We are now true believers— There is the witness of their spirit.—*Ergo*, we are now the children of God: a conclusion drawn from both the premises in a natural and logical, not a supernatural or miraculous way.

9. As I apprehend much depends on the terms *natural* and *supernatural*, and their proper use, give me leave to enlarge a little on this head. *Natural*, *ordinary*, and *common*, when spoken of God's actions, I take to be entirely synonymous terms. *Supernatural*, *miraculous*, and *uncommon*, are likewise synonymous. Thus, when God, by slow and imperceptible degrees, increases a field of wheat forty, fifty, or a hundred fold, this (though it be truly God's own work, as if he had poured new created seed down from heaven,) we call *natural*, *ordinary*, and *common*. But when the same almighty power does at once, in a visible and perceptible manner, increase five loaves to the satisfying above five thousand hungry people, this (though in reality not a whit more of a difficulty or miracle, if I may so speak, in itself) we call *supernatural*, *miraculous*, and *uncommon*; and the case is the same in *spirituals* as in *temporals*: if God calls a sinner to repentance, faith, and obedience, by the ministry of man, and by his Holy Spirit's imperceptibly disposing the sinner's faculties to receive the call; this is his

natural, ordinary, or *common* way of acting: but if he uses the ministry of a visible angel, or calls with an audible voice, '*Saul, Saul,*' outwardly; or suddenly inspires him inwardly with any immediate testimony from heaven, perceptibly coming from thence, and as easily distinguishable from the suggestions of reason and fancy, as light is distinguishable from darkness; then this is his *supernatural, miraculous,* or *uncommon* way.

10. This distinction remembered, let us examine your definition of faith. You condemn mine as defective. But I meant there to speak of faith or belief, as a genus, of which Christian saving faith may be considered as a species: had I confined myself to that species, I might perhaps have defined it,—"a full practical assent to Christian truths, and an inward conviction of things invisible." And this I apprehend would perfectly have coincided with St. Paul's 'evidence of things not seen,' though not with your "supernatural conviction of the things of God;" where does the Scripture say any thing like this, or give the least hint of faith's being a *supernatural* or *miraculous* gift? What, then, *is faith the gift of God, in no higher sense than riches are?* Yes, surely; but in no higher a sense than hope and charity are: nay, of these three, the greatest of these is charity. When I speak of a *full* and *practical* assent, you may be sure I mean such an assent as has (not barely *some* influence, but) its *full and proper* influence on practice: now, how a man can have such a full assent to all Christian truths, as is productive of all Christian practice, *and yet not have one grain of faith,* is, I own, to me quite incomprehensible.

I did not intend to refer you to the polemical or systematical writers of the last century, but to their immediate successors, who had well concocted and thoroughly digested the former crudities, and who give occasionally, in their writings, such solid and consistent expositions of the former controverted texts, as seem to have been to the satisfaction of most men of learning and piety: insomuch, that I know no divines of the Church of England, from Barrow, Sharp, and Tillotson, down to Smallridge, Clark, and Waterland, and quite to this very day, who have gone back into the old and exploded expositions, except yourselves and Mr. Whitefield; in which, however, you have not gone such unwarrantable lengths as he.

12. I think I have now touched upon all the points in your letter, except your defence of the *instantaneous gift of faith,* from its beginning, in some one first instant. I know not how to reply to this *pertinently,* without appearing to speak *harshly;* the best way I know of doing this, is to follow St. Paul's example, and 'to transfer the things to myself in a figure.' Suppose then, sir, I had asserted, that my

friends and I had the *instantaneous gift of tongues*; and you, on the other hand, had urged, that it was not so with you and your friends. If to this I had replied, that there is always some one first instant when people begin to apply to the learning any language, that therefore it is *instantaneous in its beginning*, and, consequently, all you had said about the slow use of *grammars*, *lexicons*, &c., related not to its beginning, but to its *progress* and *increase*, and so was *wide of the present question*: would not this have started you, sir? And should I not have expected to be told that this was mere quibbling? Not only *faith* and *language*, but *every thing else* in this sense is *instantaneous*, except God himself, who never had any first beginning at all.

13. But I have done with your letter, and begin now to repent that I have run out into so many particulars, and that too without any success as to the main point of my former letter; which was the stating the case between you and your adversaries, to whom you appeared to have given but an evasive answer: to this main point, therefore, we must return again. The Christ-church people gave you the nickname of Methodists. Now the charge is, that the Methodists preach sundry singular and erroneous doctrines; how many, perhaps is not easy to say; but for the greater distinctness, we will say three, viz., unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection. Now, once more, sir, hear your adversaries in their own words:—"A few young heads set up their own schemes (viz. of unconditional predestination, &c.) as the great standard of Christianity, and indulge their own notions (viz. those peculiar notions) to such a degree, as to perplex, unhinge, terrify, and distract the minds of multitudes—and all this, by persuading them, that they neither are, nor can be, true Christians but by adhering to their doctrines." Now you ask—*What do you mean by their own schemes—their own notions—their own doctrines?* It is plain, we mean their distinguishing singularities, their unconditional predestination, their perceptible inspiration, and their sinless perfection. —You go on—"Are they not yours too?" No, we are sure they are not! *Are they not the schemes—the notions—the doctrines of Jesus Christ—the great fundamental truths of the gospel?* No, we think they are not. *Can you deny one of them, without denying the Bible?* Yes, Mr. Wesley denies one of them, and we deny the other two, and yet neither he nor we deny the Bible. "They persuade (so say your adversaries) multitudes of people, that they cannot be true Christians, but by adhering to their doctrines," (viz. of predestination, inspiration, and perfection.) *Why, who says they can?* Say you, *Whosoever he be, I will prove him to be an infidel.* Well then, Mr. Wesley says, men may be true Christians without adhering to the

first doctrine; and Dr. Berriman says, they may be so without adhering to the second and third: and yet God forbid that either of those gentlemen should be proved to be infidels! You proceed—*Do you say, that any man can be a true Christian without loving God and his neighbour?* Surely no; but what is this question to the purpose? or how does this uncontroverted truth tend to clear the Methodists from teaching controverted errors? Certainly this was *ad populum*, not *ad clerum*; for he must be a poor *clerk* indeed, who could not perceive this shifting the question. Whether it was an oversight in you, or whether it was an instance of your having not arrived at a more sinless perfection than St. Peter or St. Paul, must be left to the decision of your own breast.

14. Forgive me that I speak thus freely. Whatever error or fault there was in that evasion, I am persuaded you still, in the main, approve of honest and upright dealing. To deal so with you, I must needs tell you that in my opinion you have no other way of answering the charge of your adversaries, but either by showing that the singularities which they charge you with, are fundamental, and of the essence of Christianity; or else, by frankly owning that you have been guilty of an error in preaching them "with such diligence and zeal, as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them."

15. This is the point between you and me. If we are to reap any benefit from this correspondence, (as God grant we may!) it must be by my convincing you that you insist upon things as necessary to final salvation which are not so; or by your convincing me that I neglect things which are: the former is such an error as affects not final happiness; but the latter excludes from heaven, and drives to hell. My part then may deserve the name of a *friend*, but yours alone that of a *benefactor*. To enable you to be this *benefactor*, is the *primary* end of this debate; your conviction is but the secondary only. I can think of but one way more of letting you into my wrong state in religion, (if such it be,) and that is, by reminding you of two former states of your own.—The first state is that which you mention in the 13th section of the sermon of "The Almost Christian." Now, sir, let me ask you, if you had died suddenly in that state, is it your opinion that you should have gone to hell?—or to heaven? If you shall say "to hell," this is running unwittingly into the grossest reprobation scheme: for what can be more so, than to suppose a "person using his utmost diligence to eschew all evil, and to have a conscience void of offence—redeeming the time—buying up every opportunity of doing all good to all men—constantly and carefully using all the public and all the private means of grace—endeavouring after a steady seriousness of behaviour at all times, and in all places,

and this in all sincerity, having a real design to serve God—a hearty desire to do his will in all things—to please him by whom he was called to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life," and yet consigned over to eternal death, by God's withholding from him that supernatural gift which he alone can give? If, on the other hand, you are of opinion that you should have gone to heaven, then your singularities are not essentially necessary to final salvation.—The second of your states, upon which I would interrogate you, is, when you were earnestly employed in preaching the love of God and man, before you preached or knew salvation by faith. Here I ask again, If you had died in this state, is it your opinion you should have gone to hell, or to heaven? If you should say "to hell:" then how could Christ say, that on these doctrines hang all the law and the prophets? If, on the other hand, you shall say, "to heaven:" then a man may be saved without knowing your doctrine of salvation by faith.

16. In the 78th page of the Second Appeal, you say, "Wherever I was desired to preach, salvation by faith was my only theme: things were in this posture, when I was told I must preach no more in this and this, and another church; the reason was usually added without reserve, Because you preach such doctrine." Yet in your letter to me, you say—"It was for preaching this very doctrine, the love of God and man, *before I preached or knew salvation by faith*, that several of the clergy forbade me their pulpits." This is no way material in our present debate, but I thought it most candid to note what I could not, without your help, tell how to reconcile.

17. I have now done. If I have convinced you of any error, I dare say you will have candour enough to own it. If I have not, then I am persuaded you will have charity enough to take some further pains to convince me of such vital mistakes, as threaten my perdition, and put a bar to our ever meeting at the resurrection of the just.

November 27, 1745.

LETTER IV.

For Mr. John Smith.

SIR, *December* 30, 1745.

I am obliged to you for your speedy and friendly answer; to which I will reply as clearly as I can.

1. If you have leisure to read the last *Appeal*, you will easily judge how *much* I insist on any *opinions*.

2. In writing *practically*, I seldom argue concerning the meaning of texts: in writing *controversially*, I do.

3. In saying, "I teach the doctrines of the Church of England," I do, and always did mean, (without concerning myself whether others taught them or no, either this year, or before the reformation,) I teach the doctrines which are comprised in those *articles* and *homilies*, to which all the clergy of the *Church of England* solemnly profess to assent, and that in their plain, unforced, grammatical meaning.

As to the 17th article, Mr. Whitefield really believes, that it asserts absolute predestination. Therefore I can also subscribe to it with sincerity. But the case is quite different with regard to those who subscribe to the 11th and following articles; which are not ambiguously worded, as the 17th (I suppose, on purpose) was.

4. When I say, "the apostles themselves were to prove their assertions by the *written word*," I mean the *word written before* their time, the law and the prophets; and so they did. I do not believe the case of Averel Spencer was *natural:* yet, when I kneeled down by her bedside, I had no thought at all of God's then giving any "attestation to my ministry." But I asked of God to deliver an afflicted soul: and he did deliver her. Nevertheless I desire none to receive my words, unless they are confirmed by Scripture and reason. And if they are, they ought to be received, though Averel Spencer had never been born.

5. That we ought not to relate a purely *natural* case in the Scripture terms, that express our Lord's *miracles*:—That *low* and *common* things are generally improper to be told in Scripture phrase:—That Scriptural words which are *obsolete*, or which have *changed* their signification, are not to be used familiarly, as neither those *technical terms* which were *peculiar* to the controversies of those days;—I can easily apprehend. But I cannot apprehend, that *salvation* or *justification* is a term of this sort: and much less, that *faith* and *works*, or *spirit* and *flesh*, are synonymous terms with *Christianity* and *Judaism*. I know this has frequently been affirmed; but I do not know that it has been proved.

6. However, you think there is no occasion now for the expressions used in ancient times: since the persuasions, which were common then, are now scarcely to be found. For, "does any Church of England man (you ask) maintain any thing like this, that men may commute external works, *instead of* internal holiness?" Most surely: I doubt whether every Church of *England man* in the nation, yea, every *Protestant* (as well as *Papist*) in Europe, who is not deeply sensible that he did so once, does not do so to this day.

I am one, who for twenty years used outward works, not only as

"acts of goodness," but as *commutations* (though I did not indeed *profess* this) *instead of* inward holiness. I knew I was *not holy*. But I quieted my conscience, by doing such and such *outward works*. And therefore, I hoped I should go to heaven, even without inward holiness. Nor did I ever speak close to one who had the form of godliness, without the power, but I found he had split on the same rock.

Abundance of people I have likewise known, and many I do know at this day, who "are so grossly superstitious, as to think devotion may be put upon God, instead of honesty," as to fancy, going to church and sacrament will bring them to heaven, though they practise neither justice nor mercy. These are the men who make Christianity vile, who above all others "contribute to the growth of infidelity." On the contrary, the speaking of *faith working by love*, of uniform, outward religion springing from inward, has already been the means of converting several deists, and one atheist (if not more) into real Christians.

7. "Infallible testimony" was *your* word, not *mine*: I never use it. I do not like it. But I did not object to *your* using that phrase, because I would not fight about words. If then the question be repeated, "In what sense is that attestation of the Spirit *infallible?*" any one has *my* free leave to answer, In no sense at all. And yet, though I allow that some may fancy they have it when in truth they have it not; I cannot allow that any fancy they have it not at the time when they really have. I know no instance of this. When they have this faith, they cannot possibly doubt of their having it: although it is very possible, when they have it not, they may doubt whether ever they had it or no. This was Hannah Richardson's case: and it is, more or less, the case with many of the children of God.

That *logical* evidence, that we are the children of God, I do not either exclude or despise. But it is far different from the *direct* witness of the Spirit; of which I believe St. Paul speaks, in his epistle to the Romans; and which, I doubt not, is given to many thousand souls, who never saw my face. But I spoke only of those I personally knew; (concerning whom indeed I find my transcriber has made a violent mistake, writing 13,000, instead of 1,300.) I might add, those whom I also have known by *their writings*. But I cannot lay so much stress on *their* evidence. I cannot have so full and certain a knowledge of a writer, as of one I talk with face to face. And therefore, I think the experiences of this kind are not to be compared with those of the other.

One, indeed, of this kind I was reading yesterday, which is exceeding clear and strong. You will easily pardon my transcribing part of his words. They are in St. Austin's Confessions, (lib. 7, cap. 10.)

"Intravi in intima mea, duce te: et potui, quoniam factus es adjutor meus. Intravi et vidi qualicunque oculo animæ meæ, supra eundem oculum animæ meæ, supra mentem meam, lucem Domini incommutabilem: non hanc vulgarem, conspicuam omni carni; nec quasi ex eodem genere grandior erat—non hoc illa erat, sed aliud; aliud valde ab istis omnibus. Nec ita erat supra mentem meam, sicut—Cœlum super terram. Sed superior, quia ipsa fecit me. Qui novit veritatem, novit eam. Et qui novit eam, novit æternitatem. Charitas novit eam.

*"O æterna veritas! Tu es Deus meus! Tibi suspiro die ac nocte. Et cum te primum cognovi, tu assumpsisti me, ut viderem esse, quod viderem.—Et reverberasti infirmitatem aspectus mei, radians in me vehementer; et contremui amore et horrore: et inveni me longe esse a te—et dixi, Nunquid nihil est veritas? Et clamasti de longinquo: immo vero; Ego sum, qui sum. Et audivi, sicut auditur in corde, et non erat prorsus unde dubitarem. Faciliusque dubitarem vivere me, quam non esse veritatem."**

9. From many such passages as these, which I have occasionally read, as well as from what I have myself seen and known, I am induced to believe, that God's ordinary way of converting sinners to himself, is, by "suddenly inspiring them with an immediate testimony of his love, easily distinguishable from fancy." I am assured, thus he hath wrought in all I have known, (except, perhaps, three or four persons,) of whom I have reasonable ground to believe that they are really turned from the power of Satan to God.

10. With regard to the definition of faith, if you allow that it is such "an inward conviction of things invisible, as is the gift of God in the same sense, wherein hope and charity are," I have little to object:

* "Under thy guidance and direction, I entered into my inward parts: and I was enabled to enter, because thou wast my Helper. I entered, and saw, with the eye of my soul, (such as it is,) the unchangeable light of the Lord [shining] above this very eye of my soul, and above my mind. I perceived that the light was not of this common kind, which is obvious to all flesh: neither did it appear, as if it was a larger light of the same kind. It was not a light of this description, but of another; a light that differed exceedingly from all these. Nor was it above my mind, in such a manner as the heavens are above the earth: but it was superior, because it made me. He who knows the truth is acquainted with this light; and he who knows it, knows eternity. Charity [or love] knows it.

"O Eternal Truth! Thou art my God. Day and night I sigh after thee! And when I obtained my first knowledge of thee, thou didst take me to see that there was something which I might behold. Thou didst likewise beat back the weakness of my own sight, and didst thyself powerfully shine into me. I trembled with love and with horror; and I found myself at a great distance from thee.—I exclaimed, 'Is Truth a nonentity?'—And thou didst reply from afar, 'No, indeed! I AM THAT I AM!'—I heard this, as we are accustomed to hear in the heart; and there was no ground whatever for doubting. Nay, I could more easily doubt of my existence itself, than that it was not the truth."

or, that it is "such an assent to all Christian truths, as is productive of all Christian practice." In terming either faith, or hope, or love, *supernatural*, I only mean that they are not the effect of any or all of our *natural* faculties, but are wrought in us (be it swiftly or slowly) by the Spirit of God. But I would rather say faith is "productive of all Christian *holiness*," than "of all Christian *practice*:" because men are so exceeding apt to rest in *practice*, so called; I mean in *outside religion*: whereas *true religion* is eminently seated in the heart, renewed in the image of Him that created us.

11. I have not found in any of the writers you mention, a solution of many difficulties that occur on the head of predestination. And to speak without reserve, when I compare the writings of their most celebrated successors, with those of Dr. Barrow and his cotemporaries, I am amazed: the latter seem to be mere children compared with the former writers; and to throw out such frothy, unconcocted trifles, such indigested crudities, as a man of learning, fourscore or a hundred years ago, would have been ashamed to set his name to.

12. Concerning the *instantaneous* and the *gradual* work, what I still affirm is this:—That I know hundreds of persons, whose hearts were one moment filled with fear, and sorrow, and pain, and the *next* with peace and joy in believing, yea joy unspeakable, full of glory:—that the same *moment* they experienced such a love of God, and so fervent a good will to all mankind, (attended with power over all sin,) as till then they were wholly unacquainted with:—that nevertheless the peace and love thus sown in their hearts received afterwards a *gradual increase*:—and that to this *subsequent increase*, the Scriptures you mention do manifestly refer. Now I cannot see that there is any *quibbling* at all in this. No: it is a plain, fair answer to the objection.

Neither can I apprehend that I have given an *evasive* answer to any adversary whatever. I am sure I do not desire to do it. For I want us to *understand* each other. The sooner the better. Therefore let us, as you propose, return to the main point.

"The charge is," your words are, "that the *Methodists* preach sundry singular and erroneous doctrines: in particular three, unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection. —'They set up,' say their adversaries, 'their own schemes and notions as the great standard of Christianity, so as to perplex, unhinge, terrify, and distract the minds of multitudes, by persuading them that they cannot be true Christians but by adhering to their doctrines.' This is the charge;" now you ask, "What do you mean by *their own* schemes, *their own* notions, *their own* doctrines? It is plain we mean their unconditional predestination, their perceptible inspiration, and their sinless perfection."

The charge then is, "That the *Methodists* preach unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection." But what a charge! Shall John Wesley be indicted for murder, because George Whitefield killed a man? Or shall George Whitefield be charged with felony, because John Wesley broke a house?—How monstrous is this?—How dissonant from all the rules of common sense and common honesty! Let every man bear his own burden. If George Whitefield killed a man, or taught predestination, John Wesley did not: what has this charge to do with him? And if John Wesley broke a house, or preached sinless perfection, let him answer for himself. George Whitefield did neither: why then is his name put into this indictment?

Hence appears the inexcusable injustice of what might otherwise appear a trifle. When I urge a man in this manner, he could have no plea at all, were he not to reply, "Why, they are both *Methodists*." So when he has linked them together by one *nickname*, he may hang either instead of the other!

But sure this will not be allowed by reasonable men. And if not, what have I to do with predestination? Absolutely nothing. Therefore set that aside: yea, and sinless perfection too. "How so? Do not you believe it?" Yes, I do: and in what sense I have shown in the sermon on Christian perfection. And if any man calls it an *error*, till he has answered that, I must say, "Sir, you beg the question." But I preach, perhaps, twenty times, and say no more of this than even a Calvinist would allow. Neither will I enter into any dispute about it, any more than about the *millennium*.

Therefore the *distinguishing doctrines* on which I do insist, in all my writings, and in all my preaching, will lie in a very narrow compass. You sum them all up in perceptible *inspiration*. For this I earnestly contend: and so do all who are called *Methodist preachers*. But be pleased to observe what we mean thereby. We mean that inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, whereby he fills us with righteousness, peace, and joy, with love to him, and to all mankind. And we believe it cannot be, in the nature of things, that a man should be filled with this peace, and joy, and love, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without perceiving it as clearly as he does the light of the sun.

This is (so far as I understand them) the main doctrine of the *Methodists*. This is the *substance* of what we all preach. And I will still believe none is a *true Christian* till he experiences it; and consequently, "that people, at all hazards, must be convinced of this: yea, though that conviction at first *unhinge* them ever so much, though it should in a manner *distract* them for a season. For it is better that they should be *perplexed* and terrified now, than that they should sleep on and awake in hell."

I do not therefore, I *will* not, *shift the question;* though I know many who desire I should. I know the proposition I have to prove, and I will not move a hair's breadth from it. It is this, "No man can be a *true Christian*, without such an inspiration of the Holy Ghost as fills his heart with peace, and joy, and love: which he who perceives not, has it not." This is the point for which alone I contend. And this I take to be the very foundation of Christianity.

13. The answer, therefore, which you think we *ought* to give, is that [which] we *do* give to the charge of our adversaries. "Our singularities (if you *will* style them so) are fundamental, and of the essence of Christianity." Therefore we must "preach them with such diligence and zeal, as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them."

14. It would doubtless be wrong to insist thus on these things, if they were "not necessary to final salvation." But we believe they are; unless in the case of invincible ignorance. In this case, *undoubtedly* many thousands are doubtless saved who never heard of these doctrines. And I am inclined to think this was our own case, both at Oxford, and for some time after. Yet I doubt not, but had we been called hence, God would first, by this inspiration of his Spirit, have wrought in our hearts that holy love without which none can enter into glory.

15. I was aware of the *seeming* contradiction you mention, at the very time when I wrote the sentence. But it is only a *seeming* one. For it is true, that from May 24, 1738, "Wherever I was desired to preach, *salvation by faith* was my only theme," (i. e. such a love of God and man as produces all inward and outward holiness, and springs from a conviction wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, of the pardoning love of God:) and that when I was told, "You must preach no more in this church," it was commonly added, "Because you preach such doctrine!" And it is equally true, that "it was for preaching the love of God and man, that *several* of the clergy forbade me their pulpits," before that time, before May 24, before I either preached or knew *salvation by faith.*

16. We are at length come to the real state of the question between the Methodists (so called) and their opponents. "Is there perceptible inspiration, or is there not? Is there such a thing (if we divide the question into its parts) as faith producing peace, and joy, and love, and inward (as well as outward) holiness? Is that faith which is productive of these fruits, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, or not? And is he in whom they are wrought necessarily *conscious* of them, or is he not?" These are the points on which I am ready to join issue with any serious and candid man. Such I believe you to be. If therefore I knew on which of those you desired my thoughts, I would give you them freely,

The charge then is, "That the *Methodists* preach unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection." But what a charge! Shall John Wesley be indicted for murder, because George Whitefield killed a man? Or shall George Whitefield be charged with felony, because John Wesley broke a house?—How monstrous is this?—How dissonant from all the rules of common sense and common honesty! Let every man bear his own burden. If George Whitefield killed a man, or taught predestination, John Wesley did not: what has this charge to do with him? And if John Wesley broke a house, or preached sinless perfection, let him answer for himself. George Whitefield did neither: why then is his name put into this indictment?

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But sure this will not be allowed by reasonable men. And if not, what have I to do with predestination? Absolutely nothing. Therefore set that aside: yea, and sinless perfection too. "How so? Do not you believe it?" Yes, I do: and in what sense I have shown in the sermon on Christian perfection. And if any man calls it an *error*, till he has answered that, I must say, "Sir, you beg the question." But I preach, perhaps, twenty times, and say no more of this than even a Calvinist would allow. Neither will I enter into any dispute about it, any more than about the *millennium*.

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I do not therefore, I *will* not, *shift the question;* though I know many who desire I should. I know the proposition I have to prove, and I will not move a hair's breadth from it. It is this, "No man can be a *true Christian*, without such an inspiration of the Holy Ghost as fills his heart with peace, and joy, and love: which he who perceives not, has it not." This is the point for which alone I contend. And this I take to be the very foundation of Christianity.

13. The answer, therefore, which you think we *ought* to give, is that [which] we *do* give to the charge of our adversaries. "Our singularities (if you *will* style them so) are fundamental, and of the essence of Christianity." Therefore we must "preach them with such diligence and zeal, as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them."

14. It would doubtless be wrong to insist thus on these things, if they were "not necessary to final salvation." But we believe they are; unless in the case of invincible ignorance. In this case, *undoubtedly* many thousands are doubtless saved who never heard of these doctrines. And I am inclined to think this was our own case, both at Oxford, and for some time after. Yet I doubt not, but had we been called hence, God would first, by this inspiration of his Spirit, have wrought in our hearts that holy love without which none can enter into glory.

15. I was aware of the *seeming* contradiction you mention, at the very time when I wrote the sentence. But it is only a *seeming* one. For it is true, that from May 24, 1738, "Wherever I was desired to preach, *salvation by faith* was my only theme," (i. e. such a love of God and man as produces all inward and outward holiness, and springs from a conviction wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, of the pardoning love of God:) and that when I was told, "You must preach no more in this church," it was commonly added, "Because you preach such doctrine!" And it is equally true, that "it was for preaching the love of God and man, that *several* of the clergy forbade me their pulpits," before that time, before May 24, before I either preached or knew *salvation by faith.*

16. We are at length come to the real state of the question between the Methodists (so called) and their opponents. "Is there perceptible inspiration, or is there not? Is there such a thing (if we divide the question into its parts) as faith producing peace, and joy, and love, and inward (as well as outward) holiness? Is that faith which is productive of these fruits, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, or not? And is he in whom they are wrought necessarily *conscious* of them, or is he not?" These are the points on which I am ready to join issue with any serious and candid man. Such I believe you to be. If therefore I knew on which of those you desired my thoughts, I would give you them freely,

such as they are: or (if you desire it) on any collateral question. The best light I have I am ready to impart; and am ready to receive farther light from you. My time, indeed, is so short, that I cannot answer your letters so particularly, or so correctly, as I would. But I am persuaded you will excuse many defects, where you believe the design is good. I want to know what, as yet, I know not. May God teach it me by you, or by whom he pleaseth! 'Search me, O Lord, and prove me: try out my reins and my heart. Look well if there be error or wickedness in me; and lead me in the way everlasting!'

January 3d, 1745—6.

LETTER V.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

REVEREND SIR,

I received the favour both of your book and your letter, for which I had returned my thanks sooner but for the interruption of having been a journey from home.

1. You think the case is quite different with regard to those who subscribe to the 11th and following articles, from the case of those who subscribe to the 17th. Now, I think the case is exactly the same; those articles are equally ambiguous, and I suppose of them, as you do of the 17th, that they were contrived so on purpose, in order to give the greater latitude for both parties to subscribe: that in fact they are ambiguous, is evident from the various interpretations of the commentators on them; and that they fairly admit of some latitude, you show by your practice; for the 15th article has these words:—"All we, the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things." Now, though the most *obvious, plain, unforced, grammatical* meaning be, that the most perfect Christians sin in many things, yet this hinders you not from preaching sinless perfection.* You should not then treat others as the children of the devil, for taking the same liberty which you and Mr. Whitefield take, who continue, notwithstanding, the children of God.

2. I would not willingly mistake you in this or any other article; but I must observe to you, that you speak so variously on various occasions, that it is extremely hard to take your right meaning: thus, sometimes you disclaim all *miraculous* powers, and supernatural attestations to your ministry; yet, at other times, God gives you *extraordinary attestations*, and you allow Averel Spencer's case to be

* See page 180.

supernatural: in one paragraph, you allow it lawful for good people to marry; in another, you say *all* should refrain who *can*, and that *all the children of God can:* sometimes perfection is *instantaneous*, and the newly-justified has at once power over *all* sin; at other times, this work is represented as slow, and *gradually increasing:* sometimes no one, *doubting* of faith, can be the child of God; at other times, doubting whether they ever had it or no, is more or less the case with many of the children of God: sometimes the newly-justified is represented as always receiving, in the very moment of his justification, an indubitable attestation of it from the Holy Spirit, as perceptible as the sun at noonday; yet, at other times, the justified person is spoken of as doubting whether she ever had any such *attestation*, for many months after her certain *justification*. Now, in order to soften this last case of Hannah Richardson, you shift the terms, you drop the word *attestation* of which I was speaking, and substitute the word *faith* in its stead; a person may have *faith* to-day, and be *an infidel to-morrow*, but no one can receive an *attestation to-day* from some credible and unquestionable authority, and yet *doubt to-morrow whether he had any such attestation:* if the Holy Spirit, the moment a person is justified, certifieth this justification by an *attestation* as plainly discernible from the suggestions of reason and fancy as light is discernible from darkness, then Hannah Richardson could not possibly doubt whether she had had this *attestation* or not, for above a twelvemonth after her *justification;* on the other hand, if Hannah Richardson after the *attestation* of her *justification* doubted whether she ever had such *attestation* or not, then this *attestation* is not such a glaring and manifest sunshine light as you would elsewhere represent it; nor any ways distinguishable from the suggestions of reason or fancy, since they who never had it may fancy they have it, and they who have had it may fancy they had it not.

3. I know not what kind of proof you expect of St. Paul's *technical terms;* I can say for myself, that the proof seems to me convincing even to demonstration, that *justification* was used as technically by the apostle as *Chisidim* was by the Jews, and that *faith* in some places stands for the *whole complex of Christianity*, and *works* for the *rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law:* but if the arguments which learned men have used in this matter, seem less convincing to you, you are at liberty to reject their interpretation for any other which will make sense of the apostle's reasoning. This no way affects the main of our debate, and was brought in only obliquely and hypothetically; you had argued for the propriety of using *all* Scripture phrases, upon which I excepted *obsolete* and technical terms, upon supposition that there were any such.

4. Whether for twenty years together you used outward works as commutations instead of inward holiness, you are the best and only judge; every one knows what passes in his own mind, and must be allowed to be master of his own experience: allow me then capable of telling what I experience. I was confirmed about the age of fourteen. What childish apprehensions I might have [had] before that time, I cannot well say; but, for about forty years since, I have ever believed that 'without holiness no one shall see the Lord,' nor did I once, that I know of, entertain so mean an opinion of the Supreme Being as to think he might have any thing else put upon him *in the stead;* neither did I ever, in the whole course of my life, meet with any Protestant, except yourself, that attempted commutations; I have known many Protestants that have leaned too much on the *opus operantis*, but on the *opus operatum* never one: all the *well-instructed* I know, receive the sacrament as a *means of goodness;* all the *ill-instructed*, as an act *of goodness;* but, as a *commutation instead of goodness*, surely no Protestant ever did but yourself: the most ignorant I ever met with, know better than this. If an unholy and hypocritical communicant is taken in adultery, what is the language of the lowest mob? Do they look on his *worship* as a *mitigation* of his *wickedness?* Do they not all with one mouth declare it an aggravation? Do they say?—"Well, his fault is not so great as another's, for he has been twelve times this year at the sacrament!"—No. The most ignorant wretch in the crowd can say—"What a villain is this to do thus, and yet to go so often to the sacrament!" So far are the most uninstructed Protestants from thinking that outward acts of worship may be commuted instead of chastity and purity! As to myself, I am very far from the state of a sinless perfection; yet with all my faults and infirmities about me, I can truly assert, that I am not sensible of the weakness and wickedness of commutation. But alas! this is only prejudicing you more against me, since you seem disposed to believe *that every Protestant in Europe, that is not deeply sensible that he was once thus guilty, is so still to this day.*

5. I suppose you lay but little stress on any human authority, and less on so flighty and injudicious an author as St. Austin, who, on whatever subject he wrote, (for instance, whether for or against Pelagianism,) was almost always in extremes; the same impetuosity of temper, which made him so profligate a rake whilst a sinner, made him so flighty and rapturous when he became a saint: now, what is to be gathered from the rhetorical prosopopœia of such a *valdè* man? Only this, that the oratorical flights of devotees would make strange articles put into a creed; almost every error that has crept into the church, has owed its rise more or less to rhetorical heightenings: even tran-

substantiation itself owes its birth to over-zealous orators too rapturously heightening the devotion of the altar. Yet their flights, like this which you quote of St. Austin, when put into cool language, prove just nothing at all.

6. "By calling faith, hope, or love, *supernatural*, you only mean that they are not the effect of any or all of our natural faculties, but are wrought in us by the Spirit of God." To this I have little to object but the propriety of the language. By terming some of our faculties *natural*, you seem to imply, that we have others *supernatural*, which I think we have not; and by making *faith*, *hope*, and *love*, the *effect of God's Spirit*, you seem to suggest that there are *other acts* which we can effect *without the concurrence of the Divine Energy*, which I presume we cannot; we can no more turn ourselves in our bed without his immediate and actual assistance, than we can turn ourselves from a course of wickedness to a course of holiness: instead of setting this matter higher than others, you really set it lower, if you imagine God's aid necessary only in things *spiritual*, and not in things *physical* likewise: that uniform grasp of Providence which naturalists call attraction, is the immediate act of God; and a sparrow can no more fall to the ground, without an actual exertion of the Divine Power, than tongues of fire, the instantaneous gift of languages, illumination, sanctification, &c., can descend from heaven without such power; whatsoever is done in the earth, God doth it himself; yet we are not mere instruments liable only to be acted on, but he hath delegated to us active powers, so that with his concurrence we can become real agents: there is a sense therefore in which we *will* and *act;* and there is a sense too in which God worketh in us both to *will* and to *do*. Our *faculties* (whether you call them *natural* or *supernatural*) are all God's gifts, nor can the meanest be exerted without the assistance of his Spirit.

7. You find men too apt to rest in practice; I find them much more apt to rest *in theory:* there is no *speculation*, how wild or ill-grounded soever, but what the bulk of mankind will more easily give into, than into the uniform *practice* of universal piety; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, seems to many a tedious way of getting to the next. But let an Antinomian teach that a strong belief will carry men to heaven, and thousands shall readily give into this senseless *speculation:* in like manner, how many are there who had rather rely on another's righteousness, than be at the pains of having any of their own! In short, clerical powers, irresistible decrees, confident assurance, or any groundless *theory*, is much oftener and more fatally rested on, than the steady *practice* of a holy and a Christian life.

8. I could not help being a little surprised at the offence which was

taken at my charge on the Methodists. When it is said, "Men of such and such a denomination (no matter whether assumed or imposed) hold such or such errors," the meaning is always supposed to be, that those errors are held by *some or other* of them, not that *each error* is held by *each;* and I dare say the Quakers will not think you injured them, if you produced three tenets as the tenets of the Quakers, though one were a quotation from Fox, another from Naylor, and a third from Barclay: had I therefore made the charge indiscriminately, there had been nothing so much out of the way in the charge; but that which makes the offence still odder, is, that I had *carefully distinguished* your supposed errors from Mr. Whitefield's: so far am I from confounding you together, that I have often wondered a man of your good sense and sound learning should hold any fellowship with so weak and empty a person as Mr. Whitefield. His unconditional predestination I noted as his, and expressly declared *your denial* of it: methinks therefore the declamatory paragraph about murder and housebreaking might have been spared, since I have neither indicted the murderer of housebreaking, nor the housebreaker of murder, but gave distinctly to each his due; to him, unconditional predestination; to you, sinless perfection and perceptible inspiration. As to the former, *you will not enter into any dispute about it, any more than about the millennium,* so our debate will be reduced into the shorter compass.

9. "We are at length come to the real state of the question between the Methodists and their opponents, *Is there perceptible inspiration, or is there not?*" That there is inspiration, or the influence of the Divine Spirit on the human spirit, is agreed by both parties; the whole of the question, therefore, turns upon the perceptibility of this inspiration: the question then is, Does God's Spirit work perceptibility on our spirit by *direct testimony,* (as you elsewhere call it,) by such *perceivable impulses* and *dictates* as are as distinguishable from the suggestions of our own faculties, as light is distinguishable from darkness? (as the Quakers maintain.) Or does he *imperceptibly* influence our minds to goodness, by gently and insensibly assisting our faculties and biassing them aright? Here is the whole of the question. Now let us consider how you attempt to divide this question into its parts. *Is there such a thing as faith producing peace, and joy, and love, &c.?* Yes, and producing a general good life into the bargain. *Is that faith which is productive of these fruits wrought in us by the Holy Ghost or no?* Yes, as all other good things are wrought in us. *Is he in whom they* (the fruits) *are wrought, necessarily conscious of them,* (peace, joy, love, &c.,) *or is he not?* Yes, for he who perceives not *joy,* has not joy; but what is this to perceptibility of

inspiration? You would not venture to shift terms thus in a *physical* dissertation. Suppose we were disputing about *vegetation;* I maintain that it is a work so slow and gentle, as to be altogether imperceptible. You, on the contrary, assert, that it is a *work* as *perceptible* as the sun's light at noonday: for, say you, are not these *fruits*, these *apples, pears,* and *plums*, things plainly *perceptible?* Yes indeed they are, but not one whit more perceptible than that you have now entirely *shifted* the question. This shifting quite amazes me; because I take you to have too good a head to do it without design, and to have too good a heart to do it with design: so I must leave this in the dark, till you are pleased to give me further light.

10. The question to be debated then is, not whether the *fruits* of inspiration are things perceptible, but whether *the work* of inspiration itself be so? Whether the work of God's Spirit in us be as easily distinguishable from the working of our own spirit, as light is from darkness? (as you have elsewhere asserted.) If we are in the wrong, confute us by *argumentation*, but not by threatening us with our *awaking in hell.* The profuse throwing about hell and damnation may have its effect on *weak minds;* it may terrify such into hasty and sudden converts; but on men of *reason and religion*, to whom you appeal, it will be apt to have a quite contrary effect: they well know that *that scheme* of religion bids fairest for the *true one*, which breathes the largest and most extensive *Christian charity.* I have no stronger presumption against Popery itself, than its damning all who are not of its persuasion. When Henry IV of France decided in favour of the Popish disputants, because they denied salvation possible out of their pale, which the Protestants had allowed possible out of theirs, he made a conclusion the very reverse of truth and good sense, as if there were *most safety* where there were *least charity.* Yet, by the thunder of their anathemas, they terrify weak minds into a submission to them; and to minds less weak they soften their uncharitable doctrine, by half allowing, that other well-meaning Christians may have some chance of salvation in the case of *invincible ignorance:* but even then, it must needs be in their own narrow way of thinking, and by God's working on the hearts of the well-meaning on their deathbeds, that reconciliation to Holy Church, without which none can enter into glory. But these artificial threatenings, I dare say, have no other effect on you, or any other man of sense, than to move your pity.

11. If then we may expect most *truth* where there is most charity, the presumption will be in our favour, till you shall clearly prove the other side of the question in debate, for we by no means exclude you from heaven, even upon supposition that you do hold some wrong and

enthusiastical notions: I dare say you mean no harm; yet suffer me to say frankly, I think you unwittingly do a great deal. Cartwright and the old Puritans I believe meant no harm; yet what a scene of disorder did their lectures produce! Strict order once broken, confusion rushes in like a torrent at a trifling breach. You find yourself every day going farther and farther from the orderly paths; you are now come to approve of lay preachers: well, if they preach the gospel of peace, where is the harm? But what if, order once broke, unsent persons take upon them to preach all sorts of error, discord, and confusion? "God may send," say you, "by whom he pleases:" and outward mission and order thus once set aside, the devil will send his emissaries fast enough. We are not ignorant of his devices. Your zeal puts you upon preaching in season and out of season; his cunning makes use of your honest zeal to his dishonest and diabolical purposes: he well knows you do him more service by breach of order, than ever you can do him disservice by all your laborious industry. I am not making conjectures of what may happen, but relating to you mischiefs which actually have happened; for (not to mention the shameful disorders you have undesignedly given occasion to at Wednesbury, Darlaston, Walsal, &c.,) in countries which you have not much frequented, there have appeared preachers, teaching the grossest *Antinomianism* on heaths and commons; these were hardly of your sending, yet have they personated being your disciples, by praying for you and your brother by name: others have come preaching in the streets against *prelacy*, and denouncing the bitterest woes and curses against all *bishops, priests, and deacons:* others have made as free with the lay ministry as these have with the *clerical;* and had not the rebels been driven back, we should have had thousands (it is said) pretending a mission from God to preach against the *wickedness of the great.* Thus, order once ever so little set aside, a door is opened to the tempter to drive in his legion of monstrous errors and wickedness, and throw us back into all the confusion of the last century, into the freakishness of enthusiasm, sedition, murder, and treason.

12. I know that you abhor these things: and the devil knows it too: he will therefore no more tempt you to these things, than he would tempt you to turn a *rake*, or a *stage-player;* but if he tempts you *through an excess of zeal to break in upon order,* he does his work as well. It was past his skill to make Tertullian a *profligate*, but he found the means to make him a *Montanist.* The son of a Wesley and an Annesley is in no danger of *lukewarmness*, but ought to take great care on the side of *impetuosity* and *zeal.* The tempter will never make you a *saunterer* or a *sluggard*, but if you are not upon your guard, may

possibly, before you are aware, make you a Quaker. Nay, *perceptible inspiration* admitted, you ought to be such; for I will be bold to say, that, allowing that one false principle, Mr. Barclay's is a very consistent and coherent system.

13. In short, sir, you must either defend *that* system, or renounce *this* principle; or if *your perceptible inspiration* any way differs from *that of the Quakers*, you will be so kind as to show us wherein. I have no more to add, but that I pray God to restrain *your* zeal if it be *excessive;* and to quicken *mine* if it be *defective*, as I have too much reason to fear it is.

February 26, 1745—6.

LETTER VI.

For Mr. John Smith.

SIR, *London, June 25th*, 1746.

At length I have the opportunity which I have long desired, of answering the letter you favoured me with some time since. O that God may still give us to bear with each other, and to speak (what we believe is) the truth, in love!

1. I detest all zeal which is any other than the flame of love. Yet, I find it is not easy to avoid it. It is not easy (at least to me) to be *always zealously affected in a good thing*, without being sometimes so affected in things of an *indifferent* nature. Nor do I find it always easy to proportion my zeal to the importance of the occasion; and to temper it duly with prudence, according to the various and complicated circumstances that occur. I sincerely thank you for endeavouring to assist me herein, to guard me from running into excess. I am always in danger of this, and yet I daily experience a far greater danger of the other extreme. To this day, I have abundantly more temptation to *lukewarmness* than to *impetuosity:* to be a *saunterer—inter sylvas academicas*, a philosophical *sluggard*, than an itinerant *preacher*. And, in fact, what I now do is so exceedingly little, compared with what I am convinced I ought to do, that I am often ashamed before God, and know not how to lift up mine eyes to the height of heaven!

2. But may not *love* itself constrain us to lay before men *the terrors of the Lord?* And is it not better that sinners "should be terrified now, than that they should sleep on and awake in hell?" I have known exceeding happy effects of this, even upon men of strong understand-

ing; yet I agree with you, that there is little good to be done by "the profuse throwing about hell and damnation:" and the best way of deciding the points in question with us, is cool and friendly *argumentation*.

I agree too,—"That scheme of religion bids fairest for the true, which breathes the most extensive charity." Touching the charity due to those who are in error, I suppose we both likewise agree, that really invincible ignorance never did, nor ever shall exclude any man from heaven. And hence, I doubt not, but God will receive thousands of those who differ from me, even where I hold the truth. But still, I cannot believe he will receive any man into glory (I speak of those under the Christian dispensation) "without such an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as fills his heart with peace, and joy, and love."

3. In this Mr. Whitefield and I agree; but in other points we widely differ. And therefore, I still apprehend, it is inexcusably unjust to link us together whether we will or no. For by this means each is constrained to bear not only his own, but another's burden. Accordingly, I have been accused a hundred times of holding unconditional predestination. And no wonder: for wherever this charge is advanced, "The Methodists preach sundry erroneous doctrines; in particular three, unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection," the bulk of mankind will naturally suppose that the *Methodists in general* hold these three doctrines. It will follow, that if any of these afterwards hears "Mr. Wesley is a Methodist," he will conclude, "then he preaches unconditional predestination, perceptible inspiration, and sinless perfection." And thus one man is made accountable (by others, if not by you,) for all the errors and faults of another.

4. The case of many who subscribe to the 11th and following articles, I cannot yet think, is exactly the same with the case of Mr. Whitefield and me subscribing the 17th. For each of us can truly say, "I subscribe this article in that which I believe from my heart is its *plain grammatical meaning*." Twenty years ago I subscribed the 15th article likewise, *in its plain, unforced, grammatical meaning*. And whatever I do not now believe *in this sense*, I will on no terms subscribe at all.

5. I speak variously, doubtless, on various occasions, but I hope not inconsistently. Concerning the seeming inconsistency which you mention, permit me to observe briefly, 1. That I have seen many things which I believe were *miraculous*: yet I desire none to believe my words any farther than they are confirmed by Scripture and reason. And thus far I *disclaim miracles*.—2. That I believe he that *marrieth doth well*; but he that doth not (being a believer) *doth better*. However, I have doubts concerning the tract on this head, which I have not yet leisure to weigh thoroughly:—3. That a *newly-justified*

person has *at once*, in that hour, power over *all* sin: and finds from that hour the work of God in his soul *slowly* and *gradually increasing*: —And lastly, that many, who *while* they have faith, cannot doubt, do *afterwards* doubt whether they ever had it or no. Yea, many receive from the Holy Ghost an *attestation* of their acceptance, as *perceptible* as the sun at noonday; and yet those same persons, at other times, doubt whether they ever had any such *attestation*: nay, perhaps, more than doubt, perhaps wholly deny all that God has ever done for their souls: in as much as in *this hour and power of darkness* they cannot believe they ever saw light.

6. I think St. Austin's description of his own case (whether it prove any thing more or less) greatly illustrates that light, that assurance of faith, whereof we are now speaking. He does not appear, in writing *this confession* to God, to have had any adversary in view: nor to use any *rhetorical heightening* at all; but to express the naked experience of his heart, and that in as plain unmetaphorical words as the nature of the thing would bear.

7. I believe firmly, and that in the most literal sense, that *without God we can do nothing*; that we cannot think, or speak, or move a hand or an eye, without the *concurrence of the Divine Energy*: and that all our natural faculties are God's gift, nor can the meanest be exerted without the assistance of his Spirit. What then do I mean by saying, "That faith, hope, and love, are not the effect of any, or all our natural faculties?" I mean this, that supposing a man to be now void of faith, and hope, and love, he cannot effect any degree of them in himself, by any possible exertion of his understanding, and of any or all his other natural faculties, though he should enjoy them in the utmost perfection. A distinct power from God, not implied in any of these, is indispensably necessary, before it is possible he should arrive at the very lowest degree of Christian faith, or hope, or love. In order to his having any of these (which, on this very consideration, I suppose St. Paul terms the 'fruits of the Spirit,') he must be created anew, thoroughly and inwardly changed by the operation of the Spirit of God, by a power equivalent to that which raises the dead, and which calls the things which are not as though they were.

8. The 'living soberly, righteously, and godly' in this present world, or the *uniform practice of universal piety*, presupposes some degree of these *fruits of the Spirit*, nor can possibly subsist without them. I never said men were too apt to rest on *this practice*. But I still say, I know abundance of men, who quiet their conscience without either faith or love by the practice of a few *outward works*. And this keeps them as easy and contented, though they are without hope and without God in the world, as either the doctrine of *irresistible decrees* could do, or any *theory* whatsoever.

Now what is this but *using outward works as commutations for inward holiness?* For, 1. These men love not *inward holiness;* they love the world; they love money; they love pleasure, or praise. Therefore, the love of God is not in them; nor consequently, the Christian love of their neighbour. Yet, 2. They are in no wise convinced that they are in the broad way which leads to destruction. They sleep on and take their rest. They say 'Peace, peace,' to their soul, though there is no peace. But on what pretence? Why, on this very ground, because, 3. They do such and such outward works. They go to church, and perhaps to the Lord's table. They use (in some sort) private prayer. They give alms, and *therefore* they imagine themselves to be in the high road to heaven. Though they have not 'the mind that was in Christ,' yet they doubt not but all is safe, *because* they *do* thus and thus, *because* their *lives* are not as other men's are. This is what I mean by *using outward works as commutations for inward holiness.* I find more and more instances every day of this miserable self-deceit. The thing is plain and clear. But if you dislike this phrase, we will drop it and use another.

Nearly allied to this is the "gross superstition of those, who think to put devotion upon God, instead of honesty." I mean, who practise neither justice nor mercy, and yet hope to go to heaven, because they go to church and sacrament. Can you find no such men in the Church of England? I find them in every street. Nine times in ten, when I have told a tradesman, "You have cheated me, sold me this for more than it is worth," (which I think is a breach both of justice and mercy)—"Are you a Christian?—Do you hope to go to heaven?" His answer, if he deigned any answer at all, has been to this effect: "As good a Christian as yourself! 'Go to heaven?' Yes, sure! *for I keep my church,* as well as any man."

Now, what can be plainer, than that this man *keeps his church,* not only as *an act of goodness,* but as a *commutation instead of goodness,* as something which he hopes will *do as well,* will bring him to heaven, without either justice or mercy? Perhaps, indeed, if he fell into adultery or murder, it might awaken him out of his dream, and convince him (as well as his neighbours) that this *worship* is not a *mitigation,* but an *aggravation* of his *wickedness.* But nothing short of this will. In spite of all your reasoning and mine, he will persist in thinking himself a good Christian: and that if his *brother have aught against him,* yet all will be well so he do but constantly *bring his gift to the altar.*

I entreat you, sir, to make the experiment yourself; to talk freely with any that come in your way. And you will surely find, it is the very thing which almost destroys the (so called) Christian world.

Every nominal Christian has some bit or scrap of *outward religion*, either negative or positive: either *he does not do* in some respect like other men, or he *does* something more than they. And by this, however freely he may condemn others, he takes care to excuse himself; and stifles whatever convictions he might otherwise have, 'that the wrath of God abideth on him.'

After a few impartial inquiries of this kind, I am persuaded you will not say, "As a *commutation*, surely no Protestant ever did [receive the sacrament] but yourself." Is there not something wrong in these words on another account? As well as in those, "You should not treat others as the children of the devil, for taking the same liberty which you and Mr. Whitefield take, who continue, notwithstanding, to be the children of God!" Is there not in both these expressions (and perhaps in some others, which are scattered up and down in your letters) something too keen? something that borders too much upon sarcasm? upon tartness, if not bitterness? Does not any thing of this sort, either make the mind sore, or harden it against conviction? Does it not make us less able to bear plainness of speech? or, at least, less ready to improve by it? Give me leave to add one word more before I proceed. I cannot but be jealous over you. I fear you do not know, near so well as you suppose, even what passes in your own mind. I question not but you believe, that *without inward holiness* no man *shall see* the Lord. But are you sure you never once entertained a thought that something else might be put upon him *in the stead?* Perhaps not grossly, not if it appeared just in that shape: no, nor have I, for these twenty years. But I find the same thought, to this day, stealing in continually under a thousand different forms. I find a continual danger of stopping short of a full renewal in the image of God; a continual propensity to *rest* in whatever comes between: to put some *work* or other that I do, even for God's sake, or some *gift* that I receive, *in the stead* of that great work of God, 'the renewal of my soul after his likeness in righteousness and true holiness.'

9. One point of doctrine remains. "Is there any such thing as perceptible inspiration or not?" I asserted there is: but at the same time subjoined, "Be pleased to observe what we mean thereby,—we mean, that inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, whereby he fills us [every true believer] with righteousness, and peace, and joy, with love to him, and all mankind. And we believe it cannot be, in the nature of things, that a man should be filled with this peace, and joy, and love, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, without *perceiving* it as clearly as he does the light of the sun."

You reply, "You have now entirely shifted the question."—I think not. You objected, "That I held perceptible inspiration." I answered,

"I do;" but observe in what sense—(otherwise I must recall my concession.) I hold, God *inspires* every Christian with peace, joy, and love, which are all *perceptible*. You reply, "The question is, not whether the *fruits* of inspiration are *perceptible*, but whether the *work* of inspiration itself be so." This was not my question; nor did I till now understand it was yours. If I had, I should have returned a different answer, as I have elsewhere done already.

When one warmly objected, near two years ago, "All reasonable Christians believe, that the Holy Spirit works his graces in us in an imperceptible manner;" my answer was, "You are here disproving, as you suppose, a proposition of mine. But are you sure you understand it? By the *operations* [*inspirations* or *workings*] of the Spirit, I do not mean the *manner* in which he operates; but the *graces* which he operates [*inspires* or *works*] in a Christian."

If you ask, But do not you hold, "That Christian faith implies a direct, *perceptible* testimony of the Spirit, as distinguishable from the suggestion of fancy as light is distinguishable from darkness, (whereas we suppose he *imperceptibly* influences our minds,)" I answer, I do hold this. I suppose that every Christian believer, over and above that imperceptible influence, hath a direct perceptible testimony of the Spirit that he is a child of God.

As I have little time, I must beg you to read and consider what I have already spoken upon this subject, in the first part of the Further Appeal, at the 38th and following pages: and then to let me know, What kind of proof it is which you expect in a question of this nature, over and above that of Scripture, as interpreted by the writers of the earliest Christian church.

I have not studied the writings of the Quakers enough (having read few of them besides Robert Barclay) to say precisely what they mean by *perceptible inspiration*, and whether their account of it be right or wrong. And I am not curious to know; since between me and them there is a great gulf fixed. The sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's supper, keep us at a wide distance from each other. Insomuch that, according to the view of things I have now, I should as soon commence deist as Quaker.

I would just add, that I regard even faith itself, not as an *end*, but a *means* only. The end of the commandment is love, of every command, of the whole Christian dispensation. Let this love be attained, by whatever means, and I am content; I desire no more. All is well, if we love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

10. I am aware of one inconvenience in answering what you say touching the *consequences* of my preaching. It will oblige me to speak

what will try your temper beyond any thing I have said yet. I could indeed avoid this by standing on my guard, and speaking with great reserve. But had you not rather that I should deal frankly with you, and tell you just what is in my heart?

I am the more inclined to do this, because the question before us is of so deep importance. Insomuch that were I convinced you had decided it right, there would be an end at once of my preaching. And it lies in a small compass, as you say, "I am not making conjectures of what may happen, but relating mischiefs which actually have happened." These then, "the mischiefs which have actually happened," let us consider as calmly as possible.

But first we may set aside the "thousands whom (it is said) we should have had pretending a mission from God, to preach against the *wickedness* of the great, had not the rebels been driven back." The rebels, blessed be God, are driven back.* So that mischief has not *actually happened.* We may waive also "the legion of monstrous errors and wickedness, the sedition, murder and treason of the last century:" seeing, whatever may be hereafter, it is certain these "mischiefs also have not yet *actually happened.*" Nor have I any thing to do with that poor madman, (I never heard of any more than one such) who came some time since, "preaching in *London* streets against prelacy" and Methodism; and "denouncing curses against George Whitefield, John Wesley, and all bishops, priests, and deacons."

I was more nearly concerned in what has *actually happened*, at *Wednesbury*, *Darlaston*, and *Walsal.* And these were "shameful disorders" indeed! Publish them not in Gath or Askelon! Concerning the *occasion* of which I may speak more freely to you than it was proper to do to the public.

When I preached at *Wednesbury* first, Mr. Egginton (the vicar) invited me to his house, and told me, "That the oftener I came, the welcomer I should be; for I had done much good there already, and he doubted not but I should do much more." But the next year I found him another man. He had not only heard a vehement visitation charge, but had been informed, "That we had publicly preached against drunkards, which must have been designed for satire on him." From this time we found more and more effects of his unwearied labours, public and private, in stirring up the people on every side, "to drive these fellows out of the country." One of his sermons I heard with my own ears. I pray God I may never hear such another! The minister of *Darlaston*, and the curate of *Walsal*, trod in the same

* This, and a similar passage, (p. 434,) refer to the complete discomfiture of the Pretender's forces in 1745.

steps. And these were they who (not *undesignedly*) *occasioned* all the *disorders* which followed there.

You add, "In countries which you have not much frequented, there have appeared Antinomian preachers, personating your disciples." These have appeared most in countries I never frequented at all, as in the west of *Lancashire*, in *Dorsetshire*, and in *Ireland*. When I came they disappeared, and were seen no more there; at least, not "personating our disciples." And yet, by all I can learn, even these poor wretches have done as little harm as good. I cannot learn that they have destroyed one soul that was before truly seeking salvation. But you think I myself "do a great deal of harm, by breaking and setting aside order. For, order once ever so little set aside, confusion rushes in like a torrent."

What do you mean by *order?* A plan of church discipline? What plan? The Scriptural? the primitive? or our own? It is in the last sense of the word that I have been generally charged with *breaking* or *setting aside order;* i. e. the rules of our own Church, both by preaching in the fields, and by using extemporary prayer.

I have often replied, 1. It were better for me to die than not to preach the gospel of Christ: yea, and in the fields, either where I may not preach in the church, or where the church will not contain the congregation: 2. That I use the service of the Church every Lord's day; and it has never yet appeared to me that any rule of the Church forbids my using extemporary prayer on other occasions.

But methinks I would go deeper. I would inquire, What is the end of all *ecclesiastical order?* Is it not to bring souls from the power of Satan to God? and to build them up in his fear and love? *Order* then is so far valuable as it answers these ends; and if it answers them not, it is nothing worth. Now I would fain know where has *order* answered these ends? Not in any place where I have been? not among the tinners in Cornwall, the keelmen at Newcastle, the colliers in Kingswood or Staffordshire: not among the drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers of Moorfields, or the harlots of Drury Lane. They could not be built up in the fear and love of God while they were open, barefaced servants of the devil: and such they continued, notwithstanding the most *orderly* preaching both in St. Luke's and St. Giles's church. One reason whereof was, they never came near the church; nor had any desire or design so to do, till by what you term *breach of order*, they were brought to fear God, to love him and keep his commandments.

It was not therefore so much the *want of order*, as of the knowledge and love of God, which kept those poor souls for so many years in open bondage to a hard master. And indeed wherever the know-

ledge and love of God are, *true order* will not be wanting. But the most *apostolical order*, where these are not, is less than nothing and vanity.

But you say, "Strict order once set aside, confusion rushes in like a torrent." It has been so far from rushing in where we have preached most, that the very reverse is true. Surely never was "confusion worse confounded," than [it] was a few years since in the forest of Kingswood. But how has it been since the word of God was preached there, even in this *disorderly* manner?

> Confusion heard his voice! and wild uproar
> Stood ruled; and order from disorder sprung.

O sir, be not carried away with the torrent! the clamour either of the great vulgar, or the small! Re-examine your very first notions of these things. And then review that sentence, "The devil makes use of your honest zeal to his dishonest and diabolical purposes. He well knows you do him more service by *breach of order*, than disservice by all your laborious industry."—I hope not—first, because I bring the very *order* you contend for into places where it never was before. And, 2. Because I bring (yet not I, but the grace of God) that knowledge and love of God also, in conjunction wherewith *order* is of great price,—but, without them, a worthless shadow.

I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in him.

June 25, 1746.

LETTER VII.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

REVEREND SIR,

1. I am obliged to you for the letter of the 25th of June. But before I answer any other part, I must apologize for former tartness or bitterness. I was not aware of any excess of this sort. So far am I from entertaining any bitterness against you, that (as I at first told you) whatever errors in doctrine, mistakes in conduct, or excess in zeal, I may apprehend to be in you, still I cannot but love and esteem you for the goodness of your intention. Yet something of tartness of expression is possible, and perhaps unavoidable, in a long debate: for how can the *absurdum* or *ridiculum* of an argument be exposed without a little smartness of reply? I have noted somewhat

of this sort in you, but always with applause: if any thing then of that sort escapes me, let me crave your patience and forgiveness.

Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*

2. Every one (whether an Antinomian or otherwise) who holds not the Popish doctrine of merit, may as well subscribe the 11th article in its plain grammatical meaning, as Mr. Whitefield and you can the 17th. The case therefore of the subscribers to the one or to the other, must continue to appear to me to be exactly the same, till you are pleased to say wherein they differ.

3. I had warned you against an impetuous zeal; but it seems that is not your weak side; your chief danger is from lukewarmness. The overdone humility in the first paragraph of your last letter, may serve to convince you of the contrary, if compared with paragraphs 93 and 94 of the Earnest Appeal: the comparison I am persuaded will show you, that whatever side of the question is uppermost in your mind, *that* you are apt to push with such impetuosity and excess, as unavoidably occasions the appearance of great variety (not to say inconsistency) of sentiment.

4. Thus you claim and you disclaim miracles. You claim them as having seen many miraculous attestations to your ministry. How then do you disclaim them? As "desiring none to believe your words any farther than they are confirmed by Scripture and reason." Very modest indeed! For might not St. Peter and St. Paul disclaim miracles on the same account? 2. As to the inconsistency I noted about marriage, if I take you right, you have still some doubt, and are not at leisure yet to permit or forbid to marry. 3. "The newly justified has at *once*, in that hour, power over all sin, and finds from that hour the work of God in the soul, *slowly* and *gradually* increasing."—What, till he has power over more than all sin? 4. But surely the tip-top of all inconsistencies is what follows, as explained even in your own way: "Many receive from the Holy Ghost an attestation of their acceptance, as perceptible as the sun at noonday, and yet these same persons, at other times, doubt or deny that they ever had such attestation." You have elsewhere asserted, that men may fancy they have this attestation when they have it not; you have now asserted, that they may fancy they never had such attestation when they really have had it. Can you find any words in language that shall assert more strongly, that this is the work of fancy, and not the work of God? A sick man who fancies to-day that he has swallowed a cobbler, may to-morrow fancy that he never did any such thing; but he who to-day really swallows a single pea, cannot possibly

* "Such a liberty we mutually ask and obtain of each other."

to-morrow (if he continue sound in his mind and memory) doubt or deny this matter of fact; since what was a matter of fact yesterday, will continue a matter of fact to all eternity. It is in vain to have recourse to the *power of darkness:* no one can in body or mind be darker than stone blind: now he that is stone blind to-day, cannot possibly doubt or deny that he saw the sun at noon yesterday, unless his memory and understanding be destroyed; and then he is not under the *power of darkness*, but the power of madness; and a pious man who should then suffer himself to be amused by his experiences and reveries, would be in some danger of being soon confined in the same apartment.

5. In the manner in which you first spoke of commutations, I thought I knew none so guilty; in the way in which you now explain yourself, I have reason to think I know none innocent. By *partial* and *commuting* I meant two different things. But if you will say that partial religion is a kind of commuting, as exchanging a part for the whole, then as the dispute will be entirely verbal I shall have no more to say on that head. God knows, we all offer him too small a part of duty and holiness! The highest degrees stand in need of his mercy, of which yet the lower degrees (for there are many mansions) need not through Christ despair.

6. Is there any such thing as perceptible inspiration, or not? This one point of doctrine, say you, still remains to be debated; but if this one point, like all the other points, be quite distinguished away, there will remain no longer room for debate, but only for amazement, that such sort of language should constantly be used, as all mankind must unavoidably understand in one sense, till distinguished into a quite different one. I appeal to all your readers, be they friends or adversaries, whether they did not understand you to teach an inspiration, perceptible in its *working*, as well as in its *fruits* and *effects*. Nay, sir, do not your disciples commonly understand you thus? Nay farther, do you not intend they should understand you thus? Friends that can receive it, may receive it: and as for opponents, there are distinctions ready.

7. But what you distinguish away in one paragraph, you reclaim again in the next, maintaining "That every Christian believer, over and above the imperceptible influence, hath a direct perceptible testimony of the Spirit." And for the proof of this I am referred to the 38th page of the Farther Appeal. I have again carefully read from that page to the 73d; the dispute there was about the ordinary and extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost. But of the perceptibility of the ordinary operations, as directly felt to be worked by him, there is not a word said, neither there, nor, that I know of, in any one place in

the Bible. What proof is it then which I expect? Much better than the bare assertion of weak or wicked Richardsons or Spencers, who, hurried suddenly from the purgatory of despondency to the paradise of presumption, now fancy themselves to have attestations as perceptible as the sun at noon; then sunk back into the distraction of despondency, frankly own they never had any such attestation, and that it was all a mere fancy: a demonstration that it was a mere fancy, since a fact will continue a fact in spite of fate, and must be unavoidably remembered as such, by every mind undisturbed through lunacy or idiotism.

8. In short, if you will not suffer this direct perceptibility to be called enthusiasm, you must at least allow it to be called Quakerism, till you show wherein it differs from that. The gulf you mention is not so great as you imagine. The two sacraments are means of perfection: one who fancies himself to have obtained the end, may soon come to look on the means as superfluous. Touching them is now touching the apple of your eye; so once was touching regular ordination and appointment of preachers: yet you can now bear that touch without winking. But regular orders once set aside, what a door do you open to error and discord!

9. Will you ask me again what I mean by order? Was it not manifest that I meant to speak against lay-preaching, and in favour of regular ordination? How then could you give so strange an answer—"I bring the very order you contend for, into places where it never was before." Is this true in fact? Do you bring in the ministry of regularly ordained preachers, where before the people were used to the preaching of lay-brethren? That was the order I was contending for, the breach of which, I endeavoured to show you, would be attended with very bad consequences, some of which have already *actually happened*, and others *probably* (nay, upon any factions joining, almost *certainly*) would happen. You seem to make light of the ill consequences which have already actually happened, as if a number of unsent persons, going about the kingdom, and preaching the worst of heresies, were a mere trifle, "since the poor wretches have done as little harm as good, and have not destroyed one soul." That is more than you know; but I hope it may be so, since the saving or destroying souls depends not on these, or any poor wretches whatever. But leaving salvation to the Saviour, can you deny that this is doing an infinite deal of harm? Yet this is nothing compared to the mischief which must unavoidably ensue, when any state faction shall think fit to join the irregulars, as the Prince of Orange's faction did the Calvinists in Holland, and the republicans did the Puritans here in England, and the late rebels did the Cameronians in Scotland. If unsent well meaning laymen may

preach out their zeal, do you not see, that upon the first opportunity which offers, unsent ill meaning laymen will spread their sedition like wildfire? Cartwright's irregularities did not extend so far as to the approving lay-preaching, and yet his irregularities and innovations, in the course of a century, did more harm than all the labours of his life ever did good. It is true, with all his irregularities, he was a better man than regular sluggards, drunken vicars of Wednesbury, or persecuting parsons of Darlaston. Such regulars do no good and some harm, whilst the irregulars do some good but more harm. The very irregularity of their impetuous zeal awakens some to seriousness; but at the same time, it opens a door in the long run, to the hurt of many more; and if we cast up the account at one hundred years end, we shall find the loss exceed the profit. When Cartwright was hugging himself for his many converts to piety, he would have taken it ill to be told that he was doing the devil more service, by breach of order, than disservice by all his laborious industry; and yet, for all that, could he have looked out of his grave, about the middle of the last century, he would have found that friendly admonition was literally true. And whoever should be suffered to look out of his grave, the middle of next century, will find, I believe, that the orderly preaching at St. Luke's and St. Giles's church, (how much soever it may be sneered at now,) has done more good, and abundance less harm, than the disorderly preaching at Kennington and Moorfields, assisted elsewhere by the still more irregular preaching of lay brethren. This is not mere random conjecture, but a plain pointing out what must happen, from what has ever happened already; and I defy you to produce one irregular departure of good men from the orderly paths, through zeal, which has not, sooner or later, been improved by the devil into an occasion of much mischief; such mischiefs as the rebellion and horrid crimes of the Puritans in England, and the detestable freaks of the Anabaptists in Germany.*

10. I am not conscious to myself of being biassed by the clamours of the great vulgar or the small: as numbers have no influence on me so neither has novelty; but I endeavour to seek for truth, wherever it may be found: but since you call upon me to re-examine my first notions of these things, I will recapitulate the whole affair:—A few years ago I had occasion to be in the west of England; there I first heard that you had made much impression on many people: the fact was allowed to be notorious, and I thought it worthy of great attention. My reason was this: either this gentleman preaches some more awakening doctrines than other ministers, or the Holy Ghost vouchsafes him such supernatural and miraculous blessing and attestation as he now-

* All this shows the difference between mere sectarianism and a *work of God*

a-days grants not to others; or else God has at least given him such a natural knack of persuasion as is very rare and uncommon. One of these three, I thought, must of necessity be the case, and I judged it well worth a serious inquiry which: upon this I read your Appeals, and such other papers as I could get, and when I had carefully noted what your singular doctrines were, I resolved to write to you, that either you might convince me of their importance, or that I might convince you of their impropriety. The issue was, you distinguished away all that sounded peculiar, and pleaded that you maintained no singular doctrines at all. The case was the same as to miraculous, or supernatural attestation; you had spoken of this in all the strong language of a miracle-working apostle; but when this came to be explained, all this warm solemn language amounted to no more, than that sinners, upon becoming penitents, sometimes *fancy themselves* to have manifest attestations of acceptance, and sometimes fall back into despondency, owning (as they could not do had it been real matter of fact) that it was all a mere fancy and delusion. Thus, as despondency or presumption prevails on weak minds, the fancy varies; whereas a fact is a thing invariable, and if I really had an attestation yesterday from the Holy Ghost, that my sins were all forgiven, then (how much soever he may frown upon me to-day) still I cannot, if I am in my senses, deny that he smiled yesterday, or that what happened yesterday will not remain a fact to all eternity. Well, then, how shall we account for the considerable success of your itinerant preaching? It must be owned, that you have a natural knack of persuasion, and that you speak with much awakening warmth and earnestness; that God has blessed you with a strength of constitution, equal to the indefatigable industry of your mind. These natural abilities then, without having recourse to any thing supernatural, or miraculous, might alone account for the measure of your success. Yet there is another thing which gives you more advantage, and occasions you to make more impression than all these put together, and that is, the very irregularity and novelty of your manner. "The tinners, keelmen, colliers, and harlots," say you, "never came near a church, nor had any desire or design so to do." But when it was told them, There is a man preaching upon yonder mountain, they came in as great flocks to such a dispenser of divinity, as they do to *a dispenser of physic who dances on a slack-rope.* Such a doctor may, by his stratagem, have more patients, and consequently, if he has equal skill, may do more good, than Dr. Mead, who confines himself to the unalarming and customary carriage of a chariot; yet since it is next to certain, that the rules of the college once broke in upon, many unskilful persons will take upon them to get patients by the novelty of the slack-rope, it is like-

wise next to certain, that if we cast up the physic account at the end of any one century, we shall find that surprise and novelty have done much more harm than good, and that it was, upon the whole, much better to go on in the slower but safer way of the college.

11. Forgive me the setting of the matter in this light. I would willingly set it in any light that might do you good. My first intention in writing to you, was to do myself good. I hope I have not wholly failed. Yet as I have failed in part, and have not been able to bring myself to you, let me now endeavour to bring you back to the old orderly paths, which I think would be doing good both to you and to the public. But then you must bear with some tartness. Bitterness, I am sure, I have none. Nay, I would seem as little tart as possible: let us then drop our own persons and cases, and turn our discourse, for a minute, to fictitious ones. Let us suppose then some good man (we will say Mr. Law) very desirous of promoting the love of God and man; but observing how slowly this great work was carried on by men preaching standing on their feet, his zeal puts him upon gaining the attention of the otherwise unattentive, by preaching standing upon his head. This stratagem was not without its success; many heard who otherwise had never heard at all. As numbers of auditors increased, he began to look out for assistants; but not finding many of his brethren, the clergy, of sufficient agility to accompany him, he called in the assistance of lay-brethren. An innocent, but perhaps unenlightened neighbour, endeavours to show him the impropriety of his behaviour; that, besides the irregularity and indecorum of the thing itself, it was sure to be attended with very bad consequences; that he was already aped by numbers of weak or wicked men; and that the first time there was a design of public mischief, this novelty-stratagem would be sure to be made use of, as all novelty-stratagems had ever been, to very wicked and horrible purposes.—"What, then," says Mr. Law, "would you have an end at once of my preaching?" No; God forbid! I would have an end of your headlong preaching. Take the largest and most laborious cure you please, and play the part of the most industrious curate; to this you may be regularly called; but I know no call you have to play the part of an itinerant evangelist, or to assume the episcopal, patriarchal, or apostolical, either language or office. Ah, my good friend Mr. Law! You have a regular call too to another place; how usefully and ornamentally might you be employed in your college of Emanuel, at Cambridge; not as a philosophical sluggard, or *saunterer—inter sylvas academicas currere cursum*, but *quærere verum*:* a thing well worth

* "Not to doze out your existence in academic bowers, but to seek for truth in those sacred retreats."

your search; for the longer you live, the more you will find that you want light more than heat. When you had found the truth, how advantageously might you communicate it to the expecting youth! How many hundred, in a course of years, might you fit for regular, yet zealous pastors! And to how many thousands might they, in a century or two, spread the love of God and man! These regularly raised plants, in due time, would be more numerous, but to be sure, more lasting, and less liable, when mixed with poisonous weeds, than those which are irregularly and suddenly raised in hot-beds. You would not indeed then be the head of a sect. Suffer my jealousy in turn. I fear you do not know every evil seed that may still lurk in your own breast. Are you sure there is no spark of vanity there? No love of singularity? No desire of distinction—*digito monstrari et dicier, hic est?** At least turn your emulation into a right channel. God can make you as conspicuous in a regular, as you are in endeavouring to make yourself in this irregular way. But if nothing else will serve you, but playing the part of an apostle, (nay, and pretending to a more perfect and sinless part, than they, poor men! could in the infancy of Christianity arrive to,) then I can add no more but my prayers to God, for you and for myself, that he will so cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love him here, and be prepared for a happy appeal to the awful bar, where all controversies shall be decided, and where men and angels shall be ear-witnesses of the just decision: whether it be the EUGE of "Good and faithful servant," or reproof of—"Who hath required these things at your hands?"

August 11th, 1746.

LETTER VII.

To Mr. John Smith.

SIR, *Newcastle, March 25th*, 1747.

1. In your last, I do not find much reason to complain either of tartness or bitterness. But is it so serious as the cause requires? If it be asked

> ——————— Ridentem dicere verum,
> Quis vetat?†

* "To be pointed out in the street, and hear the people say to each other, *Look, that is the man of genius!*"

† "Who can object against the recital of truth in a strain of pleasantry?"

I think, the nature of the things whereof we speak, should forbid it. For, surely, it is a very serious concern, whether we dwell in the eternal glory of God, or in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

2. If those who subscribe the 11th and following articles, do subscribe in what they believe from their hearts, to be the *plain, unforced*, grammatical construction of the words, then they are clear before God. I trust you can answer for yourself herein; but you cannot for all our brethren.

3. I am glad that our dispute concerning *commutations* in religion proves to be "entirely verbal:" as we both agree, 1. That abundance of those who bear the name of Christians, put a *part* of religion for the *whole*; generally some outward work or form of worship:— 2. That whatsoever is thus put for the whole of religion, (in particular, where it is used to supersede or commute for the religion of the heart,) it is no longer a part of it, it is gross irreligion, it is mere mockery of God.

4. When you warned me against "excess of zeal," I did not say, "This was not my weak side:" that it was not one weakness to which I am exposed. My words were, "I am always in danger of this—and yet I daily experience a far greater danger of the other extreme." I do. I am, to this day, ashamed before God, that I do so little to what I ought to do. But this you call "overdone humility," and suppose it to be inconsistent with what occurs in the 93d and 94th paragraph of the *Earnest Appeal*. I believe it is not at all inconsistent therewith: only one expression there is too strong—"all his time and strength"—for this very cause "I am ashamed before God." I do not spend *all* my time so profitably as I might, nor all my strength: at least, not all I might have, if it were not for my own *lukewarmness* and remissness; if I wrestled with God in constant and fervent prayer.

You mention four other instances of self-contradiction. The first, "You claim and you disclaim miracles. You claim them, as having seen many miraculous attestations to your ministry. You disclaim them, desiring none to—believe your words farther than they are confirmed by Scripture and reason," that is, you claim them in *one* sense, and disclaim them in *another*. Perhaps so; but this is no contradiction.—2. "You are not at leisure yet, either to permit or forbid to marry." Indeed I am. Although I commend those who are as *eunuchs, for the kingdom of heaven's sake*, yet I know *All men cannot receive this saying*, and, *that it is better to marry than to burn.*— 3. "The newly-justified has at once, in that hour, power over *all* sin, and finds from that hour the work of God in the soul, slowly

and gradually increasing—What, until he has power over *more* than *all* sin?" No. But until he has *more* power over *all* sin: the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, gradually decreasing: and till he has more peace, more joy in the Holy Ghost; more of the knowledge and love of God.—4. "But surely, the tip-top of all inconsistencies, is what follows, even as explained in your own way: many receive from the Holy Ghost an attestation of their acceptance, as perceptible as the sun at noonday, and yet these same persons, at other times, doubt or deny that they ever had such attestation."

The fact stands thus: 1. A man feels in himself the testimony of God's Spirit, that he is a child of God. And he can *then* no more deny or doubt thereof, than of the shining of the sun at noonday.—2. After a time, this testimony is withdrawn. 3. He begins to *reason* within himself concerning it; next, to *doubt* whether that testimony was from God; and perhaps, in the end to *deny* that it was. And yet he may be, all this time, in every other respect, "of sound memory as well as understanding." Now whether these propositions are true or false, they are not *contradictory* to each other. They cannot, unless it were affirmed, that the same person *has* and *has not* the same testimony at the same time.

5. However, you think I assert a thing impossible. What is impossible? That the Spirit of God should bear a clear perceptible witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God? Surely no! Whether this be fact or not, no man of reason will say it is impossible: or that the Spirit of God should cease to bear this witness. Neither can the possibility of this be denied. The thing then which is supposed impossible is this, That a man who once had it should ever *doubt* whether he had it or no? that is, (as you subjoin,) "if he continue sound in mind (or understanding) and memory." Right! "If he continue." But the very supposition is, that in *this respect*, he does not continue so. While he did so continue, he could not doubt. But his understanding is now darkened, and the very traces of that divine work well nigh crossed out of his memory. Nor can I think, "it is vain to have recourse here to the ενεργεια of the power of darkness." I verily believe, as it was the God of heaven who once *shone in his heart*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; so it is the god of this world who hath now *blinded his heart*, so that the glorious light cannot shine upon it.

6. If the Quakers hold the same perceptible inspiration with me, I am glad; and it is neither better nor worse for their holding it. Although, if I "distinguish it away," I do not hold it at all. But do I distinguish it away? or any point which I believe to be the truth of God? I am not conscious of this. But when men tack absurdities

to the truth of God, with which it hath nothing to do, I *distinguish away* those absurdities, and let the truth remain in its native purity.

It was several months before my correspondence with you, that I *thus* distinguished away *perceptible inspiration:* declaring to all men, "by perceiving or feeling the operations of the Spirit, I mean being inwardly conscious of them." "By the operations of the Spirit, I do not mean the *manner* in which he operates in a Christian."

This I mentioned in my last. But it is certain, over and above those other graces which the Holy Spirit inspires into, or operates in a Christian, and over and above his imperceptible influences; I do intend all mankind should understand me to assert, (what I therefore express in the clearest language I am master of,) every Christian believer hath a perceptible testimony of the Spirit, that he is a child of God. I use the phrase, *testimony of the Spirit*, rather than *inspiration*, because it has a more determinate meaning. And I desire men to know what I mean, and what I do not; that I may not fight as one that beateth the air.

7. Is there "not one word said of this, either in the Farther Appeal, or in any one place in the Bible?" I think there is in the Bible: in the 16th verse of the viii chapter to the Romans. And is not this very place proved to describe the ordinary *privilege* of every Christian believer, in the *Farther Appeal*, from the 45th to the 49th, and from the 56th to the 59th page?

Give me leave to remind you of some of the words. In the 49th page the argument concludes thus—"It will follow, that this witness of the Spirit is the *private testimony given to our own consciences*, which, consequently, all sober Christians may claim, without any danger of enthusiasm." In the 57th page are these words: "Every one that is born of God, and doth not commit sin, by his very actions, saith, Our Father which art in heaven: the Spirit itself bearing witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God. According to Origen, therefore, this testimony of the Spirit is not any *public* testimony by miracles, but an *inward* testimony belonging in common to all that are born of God." Once more, in the 58th page are these words: "He brings yet another proof of the superiority of those who had *this Spirit of adoption. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.* I prove this, says he, not only from the voice itself, but also from the cause whence that voice proceeds. For the Spirit suggests the words while we thus speak, which he hath elsewhere expressed more plainly, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!* But what is—*the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit?* He means the Paraclete by the gift given unto us." (But that this was an *extraordinary* gift,

we have no intimation at all, neither before nor after.) "And when the Spirit beareth witness, what doubt is left? If a man or an angel spake, some might doubt: but when the Most High beareth witness to us, who can doubt any longer?"

I am mistaken if this does not come home to the point, to the question now before us: describing a *perceptible testimony* of the Holy Ghost, "directly felt to be worked by himself."

8. But I will waive all authorities, that of Origen and Chrysostom, as well as of Hannah Richardson (though not a *weak* woman, but eminently the reverse) and Averel Spencer, though not a wicked one: only observing, that your argument proves too much. I am as fully assured to-day, as I am of the shining of the sun, that the Scriptures are of God. I cannot possibly deny or doubt of it *now*. Yet I may doubt of it *to-morrow:* as I have done heretofore a thousand times, and that after the fullest assurance preceding. Now if this be "a demonstration that my former assurance was a mere fancy," then farewell all revelation at once!

But to come closer yet, and weigh the point in debate in the balance of plain reason. You must allow there is a "testimony of the Spirit, with our spirit, that we are the children of God." But, you say, it is not a perceptible one. How is this? Let us examine it thoroughly. It is allowed, 1. The Spirit of God, 2. bears testimony to my spirit. 3. That I am a child of God. But I am not to perceive it. Not to perceive what? the first, second, or third particular? Am I not to perceive what is *testified*,—"That I am a child of God?" Then it is not testified at all. This is saying and unsaying in the same breath. Or am I not to perceive, *that it is testified to my spirit?* Yea, but I must perceive what passes in my own soul. Or lastly, am I to perceive that I am a child of God, and that this is testified to my spirit; but not to perceive *who it is that testifies;* not to know it is the Spirit of God? O sir, if there really be a man in the world, who hath this testimony in himself, can it be supposed that he does not know who it is that testifies? who it is that speaks to his heart? that speaks in his inmost soul as never man spake? If he does not, he is ignorant of the whole affair. If you are in this state, I pray God you may say from the heart, "Lord, what I know not, teach thou me." How much better were this, than to canonize your own ignorance, as the only knowledge and wisdom! and to condemn all the generation of God's children of "*idiotism* and *madness*."

9. Under your last head, you do not confine yourself now within the bounds you at first proposed; when you said, "I am not making conjectures of what *may* happen, but relating mischiefs which actually have happened." Take care you do not grow warm when I reply to this: you will have need of all your patience to bear it.

You begin, "Will you ask what I mean by *order?* Was it not manifest I meant to speak against lay-preaching?" It was: but not against that alone. Therefore, before I entered upon the question, I defined the term in a wider sense, so as to include both this and every irregularity you had objected.—You go on, "How could you give so strange an answer, *I bring this order you contend for into places where it never was before.*" I reply, this is not my whole answer. It is but one, and that the most inconsiderable part of it. But it is strictly true.—"Do you then bring in the ministry of regularly ordained ministers, where before people were used to the preaching of lay-brethren?" Yes; them who were before used to no preaching at all, or to that of those whom you would term lay-brethren, I bring to attend on the ministry of those regular preachers who have the charge of their several parishes.

But very "ill consequences" of our irregular preaching you say have "actually happened: a number of unsent persons going about the kingdom, and preaching the worst of heresies." A number! Where? Within these nine years past I have heard of two, and no more, (besides that lunatic clergyman,) who have gone about thus, though, I doubt, sent neither of God nor man. But I have heard of no heresy which they preached; only a little, smooth, undigested nonsense. Nor can the ill done by these balance the thousandth part of the good already done, by the preaching of other laymen; viz. The turning so many bold, barefaced servants of the devil, into humble, holy servants of God.

However, evil "will happen if any state faction shall join the irregulars." If they shall? Yea, if they shall attempt it, (which is far enough off,) the irregulars will not join them. We bless God that the government is at present very fully convinced of this.

"But if unsent, well meaning laymen may preach unsent, ill meaning laymen will, upon the first opportunity, spread sedition like wildfire." Yea, and clergymen as well as laymen, sent as well as unsent. Thus it ever was, and I presume ever will be.

10. That "the irregularities of Mr. Cartwright did more harm in the course of a century, than all the labours of his life did good," is by no means plain to me. And the less so, because I cannot learn from Mr. Strype, or any other impartial writer (whatever his mistakes in judgment were,) that he fell into any irregularities at all. I look upon him and the body of Puritans in that age, (to whom the German Anabaptists bore small resemblance,) to have been both the most learned and most pious men that were then in the *English* nation. Nor did they separate from the Church; but were driven out, whether they would or no. The vengeance of God which fell on the posterity of their persecutors, I think, is no imputation on Mr. Cartwright or them: but a wonderful scene of Divine Providence, visiting the sins of *the*

fathers upon their children (when they also had filled up the measure of their iniquities) unto the third and fourth generation.

I am not careful for what may be a hundred years hence. He who governed the world before I was born, shall take care of it likewise when I am dead. My part is to improve the present moment. And whatever may be the fruits of lay-preaching when you and I are gone to our long home, every serious man has cause to bless God for those he may now see with his eyes, for the saving so many souls from death; and hiding a multitude of sins. The instances glare in the face of the sun. Many indeed God hath taken to himself: but many more remain, both young and old, who now fear God and work righteousness.

11. Perhaps a parallel drawn from physic may hold more exactly than you was apprized of. For more than twenty years I have had numberless proofs that *regular physicians* do exceeding little good. From a deep conviction of this, I have believed it my duty, within these four months last past, to prescribe such medicines to six or seven hundred of the poor, as I knew were proper for their several disorders. Within six weeks, nine in ten of them who had taken these medicines were remarkably altered for the better. And many were cured of diseases under which they had laboured for ten, twenty, forty years. Now, ought I to have let one of these poor wretches perish because I was not a *regular physician?* To have said, "I know what will cure you. But I am not of the *college*. You must send for Dr. Mead?" Before Dr. Mead had come in his chariot, the man might have been in his coffin. And when the doctor was come, where was his fee? What! he cannot live upon nothing! So instead of an *orderly cure* the patient dies. And God requires his blood at my hands!

12. But you think "if one should look out of his grave in the middle of the next century, he would find the *orderly* preaching at St. Luke's and St. Giles's church had done more good than the disorderly preaching at *Kennington*." I cannot learn by all the inquiries I have made, that at present it does any good at all: that either Dr. B. or Dr. G. has in all these years converted one sinner to God. And if a man saves no souls while he is alive, I fear he will save few after he is dead.

But "it does abundance less harm." Perhaps not so neither. 'He that gathereth not with me scattereth'—more especially if he be a preacher. He must scatter from him if he does not gather souls to God. Therefore a lifeless, unconverting minister, is the murderer-general of his parish. He enters not into the kingdom of heaven himself, and those that would enter in he suffers not. He stands in the gap between them and true religion; because he has it not they are easy without it. Dead form contents him, and why not them? "Sure it is enough if we go as far as our guide!" And if he is not outwardly

vicious, he the more effectually secures them from all inward, solid virtue. How choice a factor for hell is this! Destroying more souls than any deist in the kingdom! I could not have blamed St. Chrysostom, if he had only said, "Hell is paved with the skulls of *such* Christian priests."

13. I must be short on what remains. You suppose the impression made on men's minds by this *irregular* way of preaching is chiefly owing "to the force of novelty." I believe it was to obviate this very supposition, that my preaching has so rarely made any impression at all till the novelty of it was over. When I had preached more than six score times at this town, I found scarce any effect: only that abundance of people heard, and gaped, and stared, and went away much as they came. And it was one evening, while I was in doubt if I had not laboured in vain, that such a blessing of God was given as has continued ever since, and I trust will be remembered unto many generations.

You ascribe it likewise in part to "a natural knack of persuasion." If either by a natural or an acquired power of persuasion I can prevail upon sinners to turn to God, am I to bury even that talent in the earth? "No: but try if you cannot do more good in a college or in a parish." I have tried both, and I could not do any substantial good, either to my pupils or my parishioners. Among my parishioners in Lincolnshire, I tried for some years: but I am well assured, I did far more good to them by preaching three days on my father's tomb, than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit.

But you "know no call I have to preach up and down, to play the part of an itinerant evangelist." Perhaps you do not. But I do; I know God *hath required this at my hands.* To me, his blessing my work is an abundant proof, although such a proof as often makes me tremble. But "is there not pride or vanity in my heart?" There is; yet this is not my motive to preaching. I know and feel that the spring of this is a deep conviction that it is the will of God, and that were I to refrain I should never hear that word, 'Well done, good and faithful servant:'—but 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.'

LETTER VIII.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

REVEREND SIR,

You make some question, whether my last was not wanting in that seriousness, which was required in so awful an inquiry as, *Whether we dwell in the eternal glory of God, or in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels?* Truly this is so awful a subject, that I should think all pleasantry here quite out of place: but was that the subject of our inquiry? How much then was I mistaken when I took it to be no more than this, Whether Mr. Wesley is not wrong in his notions about the perceptibility of inspiration, and his deviations from established order? Now, if you think to blend these two inquiries together, as if they were convertible, it will be impossible for me to receive it with that seriousness which you seem to expect. Do not so profusely fling about everlasting fire, nor throw out such frequent hints, that all who dispute your nostrums are mere ignorants, condemners of all God's children, and consequently children of the devil. If I am in this bad state, you pray God I may say from my heart, "Lord, what I know not teach thou me." Sir, your petition is granted; for (in whatsoever state I am) that is my daily prayer, and was so perhaps before you were born: for many years I have implored the assistance of God's good Spirit in the impartial search of truth, in which I have ever begged to be preserved at the expense of friends, relations, country, and all that I hold near and dear to me in this world. This you allow is much better than to *canonize my own ignorance*, which whether I do or not, I cannot say, because I do not at all understand the meaning of that phrase. But I am sure I do not condemn *all* (or any of) *God's children of idiotism and madness*; but I leave that to those whose schemes require it to be allowed, that many of God's children *do not continue in sound mind and memory.*

2. Sir, whilst you are pleased to submit to the equality of a disputant, you should not pronounce sentence *ex cathedrâ*. Who it is that mistakes his own ignorance for the only knowledge and wisdom, is not as yet decided; and till it is, I should esteem it a rude begging the question, to throw that imputation upon you, though it were cloaked under the charitable prayers of—— "God help your ignorant head," or "the Lord correct your damnable error, and snatch you from hell fire." The softest prayers may be so contrived as to suggest the rudest

things, even that one's antagonist is a brand of hell. This may move terror in children, but pity only in men of sense. Let me therefore once more entreat you to be more sparing of this manner, at least in your appeals to men of reason and religion.

3. And if this debate is to go any farther, I must insist upon your keeping your temper, and upon your bearing with patience your adversary's supposing himself in the right, and you in the wrong; he does but suppose so, and therefore keeps himself open to conviction, whenever you shall be able to offer it. Whenever it comes, he will receive it gladly; and if it never comes, he must then conclude you in an error, but such an error as no way shakes his opinion of your being a reasonable, sincere, and good man. Instead of anathematizing you, or devoting you to hell, he hopes to meet you in the blessed regions of heaven. Now, preserve but the same candour for him that he retains for you, and then this our friendly debate may be a friendly debate to the end of the chapter.

4. To proceed then. I can very patiently hear your reply to what I said of a number of unsent persons preaching about the kingdom: you have heard of but two, and no more; but I have heard of twice that number in one county, and of many more in other counties of this kingdom. I myself never saw but one; he prayed for you and your brother by name; and besides much *smooth, undigested nonsense*, preached up *heresy*, even that worst of heresies, (as not striking at the branches, but the whole root of holiness at once,) I mean Antinomianism. I was soon after told that I should see this preacher no more, for that he was committed to the county gaol, upon his own confession, for horse-stealing. Now, how many such preachers, or such horsemen, are gone forth in the kingdom, is not at all material to my argument, which is as well illustrated by one example, as by a thousand.

5. Whether the irregulars shall never join any state faction?—Whether they are not more liable to sedition than the regularly ordained clergy?—Whether the civil war, and the destruction of church and state, was God's vengeance for the persecution of those holy good men, the Puritans?—Whether you, without the study of physic, can cure more hundreds in four months, than the ablest students in physic can cure in as many years?—And whether Dr. B. and Dr. G. (whom I know not) are such wicked numskulls as are fit to pave hell withal?—All these things, to shorten our debate, I shall pass untouched. I must only observe, that much the greater part of the few clergy with whom I have the pleasure to be acquainted, are as averse to *dead form*, and as zealous for *inward solid virtue*, as you, or any one living can be: though they cannot take the liberty of

gaining attention by irregular bold strokes, as never having yet had any call from the pulpit to the tombs.

6. That you caught attention by such bold strokes as preaching on tombs and mountains, I hope I might tell you without contradiction, because I had it from yourself, and you had told me so in express *terms*: nay, you now confirm this, whilst you attempt to deny it: *for many gapers and starers came to hear you from your first appearance at Newcastle*, though you had preached above sixscore times before you perceived you had made much *impression*. But you perceived the impression much sooner at *Epworth*, where the novelty and oddity of a son's preaching on his father's tomb, had more effect *in three days*, than preaching in his pulpit had *in three years*. Is not this plainly declaring that the effect was owing to the novelty, and to the novelty only? For here was the same preacher, the same hearers, and surely the same God to influence, (unless it were to be profanely said, that there is one God of the church, and another stronger influencing god of the churchyard,) so that the only difference between preaching in the pulpit and on the tomb was this, that the former, being customary, made little impression; while the latter, from its strangeness, caught much attention. You may fancy, perhaps, that you have a divine call thus to catch attention; but other clergymen are sure they have no such thing, and therefore hold themselves obliged to forbear the novelty of preaching on tombs, as much as the singularity of preaching on their heads.

7. There are three ways in which the Holy Spirit may be said to bear witness. 1st. By external, miraculous, sensible attestations, (as by an audible voice from heaven, by visible signs, wonders, &c.) Or 2dly. By internal, plainly-perceptible whispers, ("Go not into Macedonia. Go with these men. Join thyself to this chariot," &c.) Or lastly, By his standing testimony in the Holy Scriptures. In all these three senses St. Paul and the other apostles might truly say—'The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' If external miraculous powers, and internal prophetic inspiration, both continued in the days of Ignatius and Polycarp; then they might too truly assert the same thing in all the three senses. But if in the days of Origen and Chrysostom external miraculous powers had ceased, while internal prophetic inspiration still remained; then they could not truly use the same phrase but in the two last senses. Lastly, if in the days of St. Bernard both miracles and prophecy had entirely ceased; then he could not truly use the expression but in the last sense only. If Bernard (who was somewhat enthusiastically given) yet insisted that he had still plainly-perceptible whispers, it would be natural for his neighbours to call on him to show either that it should

be so by Scripture, or that it *was* so by facts. If for the former he produced Rom. viii, 16, the answer was easy, "You attempt to decide controversies by the very controverted texts." If for the latter he produced variable facts, to-day asserted, to-morrow doubted, and the day following denied; then it is evident the whispers were not so plainly-perceptible as was asserted, or that they were not the whispers of Him in whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. The spirit of man, and his fancies or opinions, may vary, but the Spirit of God, and his facts, cannot. You may be fully of opinion to-day that the Scriptures are of God, and doubt of that to-morrow, and so vary your opinion a thousand times: but what is this to the purpose? We were speaking not of man's opinions, but of God's facts. Turn this to fact, and see how you will like it. If God tells you to-day that the Scriptures are true; can you to-morrow doubt whether they are false? Or could the man in the gospel to whom Christ distinctly said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," doubt or deny the day following that Christ ever said such a word? Yes, if we will groundlessly and blasphemously suppose that the god of this world can more strongly obliterate than the God of heaven can imprint: but if it be obliterated, whether it be by the god of the world, the devil, or by the goddess of the night, the moon, the man is no longer *compos mentis;* is altogether incapable of true religion, and fit only for the regions of Moorfields. Yet you suppose such a one still a religious subject, even after you allow that he does not continue in sound mind and memory. Now, pray sir, is it you or I that impute idiotism and madness to the children of God?

8. That the Spirit beareth witness with the spirit of the faithful, that they are the children of God, in some sense or other, (suppose in the third above mentioned,) was never denied by sober Christians: but that he beareth witness precisely in the first or second sense, was never maintained but by Montanists, Quakers, and Methodists: who have no more right to quote this text as decisive in favour of their peculiar interpretation, than the others have to urge [it] as decisive in favour of theirs. Neither this text, therefore, nor any other that I know of in the Bible, at all favours the doctrine of a direct, perceptible inspiration, as easily distinguishable from all suggestions of reason or fancy, as light is from darkness. Now if Scripture fails, the only remaining proof is from instances and experiences. If we ask how we may know that these instances are not mistakes; the answer is, you feel they are not, for *God speaks to the inmost soul as never man spake.* If we reply that there are enthusiasts in the world, who are fully persuaded that they have this inward speaking, when in truth they have not; then you can keep your temper no longer, and the only answer is.

that if we question it in you, or perceive it not in ourselves, we are *ignorant of the whole affair, and doomed to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Proceeds this now from the benign spirit of charity, or breathes it not a different and quite contrary spirit?

9. Some years ago a Quaker came to me with a message, which he was fully persuaded he had received from God. As the matter of the message was innocent, it might possibly come from Him; but I thought it more probable that it was only the effect of an overheated imagination. I asked the man what reason he had to think it rather an inspiration of God than a suggestion of fancy; he answered almost in your very words, that the inward light was as plainly perceptible as the outward, and that God speaking to the inmost soul was distincter and sweeter than ever man spoke. Thus far you are equal. But, in point of charity he far outdid you: for he allowed that all the sincere servants of God, and hopers for salvation, were in a fair way for it, though they had not been favoured like himself with a direct perceptible inspiration concerning these things. Yet I could not help suspecting that my neighbour was enthusiastic, although for some years, (*except in this respect,*) *he continued in his sound mind and senses;* but at last his heated imagination blazed out; and I had the mortification to see this poor man confined, when he employed himself all day long in repeating gibberish, as a proof of his having the gift of unknown tongues.

10. In short, as the enthusiast seems as confident of his inspiration as one really inspired is of his, a third person hath a right to call for other proof than confident assertion: every one may say like Pharaoh in Cowley,

> "If thus from God you come," said Egypt's king,
> "What sign, what powers, what credence do you bring?"

God commonly attests to inward inspiration by outward miracles. To this attestation too you have likewise laid claim, to the casting out devils, to the doing many wonderful works, and to the having seen many miraculous things; now do but make good this claim, and I shall readily believe, (not any thing which you shall advance contrary to plain Scripture,) but your interpretation of doubtful and controverted passages, preferably to the interpretation of all other men. But if you can by no means make this good, then I again call upon you ingenuously to own it, and to confess (as you do on another occasion in your last letter) *that the expression is too strong.*

11. I heartily thank you for your sermons: I was in hopes to have found there, (according to your profession in your first letter,) *the love of God and man more insisted on ten times over than all other subjects whatever,* but I must own I was disappointed; other subjects being ten times over more insisted on than that. There is, however, such a

vein of seriousness and piety throughout the whole, as will ever make me love and esteem the author, and wish him freed from all excess and extravagance. Where we differ I may possibly be in the wrong; but where we agree I am sure we are both in the right. Our agreements are material, our differences (at least in the eye of charity) but trivial. Charity never faileth. This shall endure when all controversies about faith shall be ended, and when faith itself shall be swallowed up in vision.

April 27, 1747.

P. S.—Since I wrote the above, it came into my mind that possibly by your putting in Greek letters, the ενεργεια of the powers of darkness, you meant to suggest to me some particular emphasis of the original. But upon turning to the original I find no such expression. I can find the word but seven times in the New Testament. Six times it notes the power of God: the seventh is———'ενεργειαν τε Σατανα, the *working of Satan:* "What, to erase the testimony of the Holy Ghost out of the memory of justified believers who are saved?" No, but to amuse with signs and lying wonders, them that receive not the love of the truth, them that perish. The same apostle elsewhere says 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid' (to whom? to those to whom God specially reveals it? No, but) 'to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds' (of whom? of true believers? No, but) 'of them who *believe not.*'—Strange! that from these passages, that mention the influence of the devil over wicked infidels, men should frame such a groundless, such a blasphemous hypothesis, as that when God has testified their justification to the regenerate in express terms, and as perceptible as the sun at noon; yet the devil has the controlling power to erase God's plain testimony, and to throw God's children into such distraction, that they shall not only assert what God testified was false, but shall totally forget and deny that he ever testified any such thing at all!

LETTER IX.

To Mr. John Smith.

SIR, *St. Ives, July* 10, 1747.

1. You put me in mind of an eminent man, who preaching at St. James's said, "If you do not repent, you will go to a place which I shall not name before this audience." I cannot promise so much either in preaching or writing before any audience, or to any person whatever. Yet I am not conscious of doing this very often, of "profusely flinging about everlasting fire." Though it is true I mentioned it in my last letter to you, as I have done now a second time, and perhaps I may mention it yet again. For (to say the truth) I desire to have both heaven and hell ever in my eye while I stand on this isthmus of life, between these two boundless oceans. And I verily think the daily consideration of both highly becomes all men of reason and religion.

2. I think likewise, (or I would not spend five words upon the head,) that these are nearly concerned in our present question. To touch only on one branch of it: if I live in wilful sin, in a sinful "deviation from established order," am I not in the way to hell? I cannot take it any otherwise. I cannot help "blending these two inquiries together." I must therefore speak seriously or not at all; and yet, I trust, without "losing my temper." Do you complain of this first, that I may not complain? It appears to me that you show more eagerness of spirit, more warmth and resentment in your last, than you ever have done from the beginning.

3. You spoke of "a number of unsent persons going about and preaching the worst of heresies." I answered,—"Within these nine years I have heard of two, and no more, who have gone about thus, though I doubt neither sent of God nor man." Their names were Jonathan Wildboar, and Thomas Smith,-*alias* Moor, *alias* I know not what: for I fear he changed his name as often as his place. It is not unlikely that either of these might steal as well as lie, which they have done abundantly, particularly in claiming acquaintance with Mr. Whitefield or me, wherever they judged it would recommend them to their hearers. I should not be surprised to hear of two more such: but I have not yet, in all the counties I have gone through between London and Berwick-upon-Tweed, or between Deal and the Land's-end.

4. I would to God all the clergy throughout the land were "zealous for inward, solid virtue." But I dare not say one in ten of those I have known are so in any degree. The two clergymen of this place, on a late public occasion, were led home at one or two in the morning in such a condition as I care not to describe. One of them is rector of Lalant also, (a parish east of St. Ives,) of Twidnack to the south, and Zunnor to the west. At Zunnor he keeps another assistant, and one who is just as sober as himself, and near as zealous —not indeed for inward or outward virtue; but against these "scoundrels that pretend to preach in his parish."

5. I never "attempted to deny" that the novelty of our manner of preaching has induced thousands and ten thousands to hear us, who would otherwise never have heard us at all, nor perhaps any other preacher. But I utterly deny that "the effects wrought on many of them that heard, were owing to novelty, and that only." The particular effects wrought at Epworth were these:—Many drunkards—many unjust and profane men, (on whom both my father and I had for several years spent our strength in vain,) from that time began to live (and continue so to do) a sober, righteous, and godly life. Now I deny that this effect can be owing to novelty, or to any principle but the power of God.

If it be asked, But were there not "the same hearers, the same preachers, and the same God to influence, in the church, as on the tombstone?" I answer, 1. There were not *all* the same *hearers* in the church; not above one third of them: 2. There was the same *preacher* in the church, but he did not *then* preach the same doctrine; and, therefore, 3. Though there was the same God, there was not the same influence or blessing from him.

6. The sum of what I offered before, concerning *perceptible inspiration*, was this:—"Every Christian believer has a perceptible testimony of God's Spirit, that he is a child of God." You objected, that there was not one word said of this, either in the Bible, or in the *Appeal*, to which I referred. I replied, "I think there is in the Bible, in the 16th verse of the viiith chapter to the Romans. And in the Farther Appeal, this place is proved to describe the ordinary privilege of every Christian believer."

This is there shown, both by Scripture, by reason, and by authority, particularly that of Origen and Chrysostom, whom his lordship of Litchfield had cited in his Charge, as asserting just the contrary. But waiving authorities, I reasoned thus: "You allow there is a testimony of the Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God. But you say, it is not a *perceptible* one. How is this? Let us examine it thoroughly. It is allowed, 1. The Spirit of God: 2. bears

testimony to my spirit: 3. that I am a child of God; but I am not to perceive it. "Not to perceive what? The 1st, 2d, or 3d particular? Am I not to perceive *what is testified?* That I am a child of God? Then it is not testified at all. This is saying and unsaying in the same breath. Or am I not to perceive *that it is testified to my spirit?* Yea, but I must perceive what passes in my own soul! Or, lastly, am I to perceive that I am a child of God, and that this is testified to my spirit, but not to perceive *who it is that testifies?* Not to know it is the Spirit of God? O, sir, if there be really a man in the world who hath this *testimony* in himself, can it be supposed that he does not know who it is that testifies? who it is that speaks to his heart?

7. Instead of giving a direct answer to this, you have recourse to the same supposition with his lordship of Litchfield and Coventry, viz. That there was once an inward *perceptible testimony* of the Spirit, but that it was peculiar to the early ages of the church.

"There are three ways," say you, "in which the Holy Spirit may be said to bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 1. By external, miraculous, attestations: 2. By internal, plainly-perceptible whispers." (I must add, "not in words, at least not always, but by some kind of impressions equivalent thereto.") 3. "By his standing testimony in the Holy Scriptures. The apostles had all these three. Origen and Chrysostom probably the two latter. But if St. Bernard (several hundred years after) pretended to any other than the third, his neighbours would naturally ask for proof, either that it *should* be so by Scripture, or that it *was* so by facts."

Well, then, let us suppose St. Bernard and one of his neighbours to be talking together on this subject. On St. Bernard's saying, "The Spirit of God bears witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God:" —his neighbour replies, I suppose he does, but not by an inward, plainly-perceptible testimony. "Yes, by an inward, plainly-perceptible testimony. I now have this testimony in myself. I plainly perceive that I am a child of God, and that it is his Spirit that testifies it to my spirit:"—I fear you are somewhat enthusiastically given. I allow God's standing testimony in the Scriptures. But I cannot allow that there is now any such thing as this *inward* testimony, unless you can either prove by Scripture that it *should* be so, or by facts that it *is* so.—"Are not these words Scripture: 'The Spirit itself beareth testimony with our spirit, that we are the children of God?'"—Yes; but the question is, How they are to be understood? For I deny that they speak of an inward testimony. They speak of the outward, standing testimony of God in the Holy Scriptures.—"You put a manifest force upon the text. You cannot prove that it speaks

of any outward testimony at all. But the words immediately preceding prove to a demonstration that it speaks of an inward testimony; 'Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage unto fear.' (Is not fear an inward thing?) 'But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, even the same *Spirit* which 'God hath sent forth into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!'"—I do not deny that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit. But I deny your peculiar interpretation of this text. I deny that this text at all favours an inward, perceptible testimony.

"The Spirit which God hath sent into my heart, and which now cries in my heart, 'Abba, Father,' now beareth testimony with my spirit, that I am a child of God. How can these words be interpreted at all, but of an inward, perceptible testimony?"—I tell you of God's standing testimony in Scripture.—"This is a palpable violence to the text. They no more speak of Scripture than of miracles. They manifestly speak of what passes in the heart—the spirit—the inmost soul of a believer, and that only."

8. But you would say, "Suppose this Scripture to prove that it *should* be so, can you show by facts that it *is* so?" Not if you take it for granted that every one who speaks of having this witness in himself is an enthusiast. You are then in no danger of proof from this quarter. You have a short answer to every fact which can be alleged.

But you turn the tables. You say it is I who allow that "many of God's children do not continue in sound mind and memory." I allowed, 1. A man feels the testimony of God's Spirit, and cannot then deny or doubt his being a child of God:—2. After a time this testimony is withdrawn, (not from every child of God. Many retain the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.)—3. *Then* he may doubt whether that testimony was of God, and perhaps at length deny that it was; (especially if his heart be hardened by the deceitfulness of his sin.) And yet he may be all this time in every other respect of "sound memory, as well as understanding." In this respect I allowed he is not; that is, "His understanding is now darkened, and the very traces of that Divine work well nigh erased out of his memory." So I expressly determined the sense wherein I allowed, "He does not continue in sound mind and memory." But did I allow that even then he was *non compos mentis*, a madman in the common sense? Nothing less; I allowed no more, than that the Divine Light being withdrawn, his mind was again dark as to the things of God; and that he had forgotten τὸν καθαρισμὸν τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν,* well nigh, as though it had never been.

* 2 Peter i. 9.

9. But you say, "If variable facts be produced, to-day asserted, to-morrow denied."—Nay, the facts, whether asserted or denied, are still invariable. "But if they be ever doubted or denied, they never were plainly perceptible." I cannot discern any force in that consequence: however, if they are afterwards "denied, they are not from Him, 'in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning:'" neither is this consequence good. Though God is ever the same, man may either assert or deny his works. "The spirit of man, and his fancies or opinions, may vary, but God and his facts cannot." Thus far they can and do. God does not now bear witness, as he did before. And this variation of the fact, makes way for a variation in the judgment of him who had that witness, but now hath it not. "You may be fully of opinion to-day that the Scriptures are of God, and doubt of this to-morrow. But what is this to the purpose?" Very much. I am as fully convinced to-day that the Scriptures are of God, as that the sun shines. And this conviction (as every good gift) cometh from the Father of Lights. Yet I may doubt of it to-morrow. I may throw away the good gift of God. "But we were speaking, not of men's opinions, but of God's facts." We were speaking of both: of man's opinions, or judgment, concerning God's facts. "But could he, to whom Christ said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'—ever doubt or deny that Christ said so?" I question not, but in process of time he might, particularly if he drew back unto perdition. But however that be, it is no "blasphemous supposition," but a plain undeniable truth, that the god of this world can obliterate what the God of heaven has strongly imprinted upon the soul. Yea, and that he surely will, unless we stir up the gift of God, which is in us, by earnestly and continually watching unto prayer.

I presume you do not deny that a believer, one who has the witness in himself, may *make shipwreck of the faith*; and consequently lose the witness (however it be explained) which he once had of his being a child of God. The darkness which then covers his soul again, I ascribe (in part) to the energy of Satan, who ενεργει [worketh] (according to the apostle) in the children of unbelief, whether they did once believe or no. And has he not much power even on the children of God? to disturb, though not to destroy? to throw fiery darts without number; especially against those who, as yet, are but weak in the faith? to inject doubts and fears: sometimes unbelieving, sometimes even blasphemous thoughts? And how frequently will they be wounded thereby, if they have not put on the whole armour of God!

10. You add, "If we reply, There are enthusiasts in the world, you can keep your temper no longer; and your only answer is, If we per-

ceive not the witness in ourselves, we are ignorant of the whole affair, and doomed to the everlasting fire, 'prepared for the devil and his angels.'" I said not so. I can keep my temper, (blessed be God,) if you call me a hundred enthusiasts: if you affirm, I am ten times more of an enthusiast than that poor Quaker probably was. The sharpest word I said, was, "If a man does not know who it is that testifies with his spirit he is a child of God, he is ignorant of the whole affair." But I felt no anger when I said this. Nor do I now. Though I still think, (because you say it yourself,) "that you are ignorant of the whole affair," of the inward testimony for which I contend. Yet am I far from dooming you to everlasting fire. What you know not, I trust God will reveal unto you. Least of all was this my "only answer" to your supposition, "That this perceptible testimony is only an imagination, unless I am altogether in a dream." I have given you some other answer, and a pretty full one to the objection: such a one, I think, as the nature of the thing admits, at least, as my capacity would allow.

11. I have largely considered, both in the third part of the Appeal and in the latter part of the Second Letter to Mr. Church, the unreasonableness of the common demand, to prove our doctrine by miracles. I cannot but refer you to those tracts, having neither time nor inclination *actum agere*. Only I would weigh what you have now advanced in support of that demand. "If the enthusiast is as confident of his inspiration, as one really inspired is of his, a third person has a right to call for other proof than confident assertions," that is, for miracles. So you explain yourself in the following sentence; let us try how this consequence will hold, in a particular instance. 'The Spirit said unto Paul, Go not into Macedonia.' When he related this to his companions, ought they to have replied, "We call for other proof of this, than your confident assertion; seeing enthusiasts are as confident of theirs, as you are of this revelation?" If you say, "They had seen his miracles at other times:" I know not that; perhaps they had, perhaps they had not. But to step a little forward, "If in the days of Origen and Chrysostom, external miraculous powers were ceased, while internal inspiration still remained:" what becomes of your demand here? It is totally excluded: although there were, in those days also, pretenders to what they had not.

And yet there might have been other sufficient reasons for believing the assertion of Origen, Chrysostom, and St. Bernard too, that they had this internal testimony. Such was, besides the holiness of their lives, that great and standing miracle,—their saving so many souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins.

12. There are at least as many pretenders to the love of God, as

there are to the witness of his Spirit. But does this give me a right, if a man asserts he loves God, to demand his proving this assertion by miracles? Not so; but by their fruits I shall know a real and a pretended love of God. And in the same manner may I know him that has the witness of God's love, from an enthusiastic pretender to it. But if a man disclaims it, he sets himself out of the question. It is beyond dispute that he has it not.

Neither do I want miracles, in order to determine my judgment with regard to Scripture, variously interpreted. I would not say in this case, Show me a sign; but, Bring forth your strong reasons; and according to these, weighed in an even, impartial scale, would I incline to one side or the other.

13. From the beginning of our correspondence, I did not expect you to alter your judgment touching these points wherein we differed. But I was willing (and am so still) to hear and consider whatever you should advance concerning them; and so much the rather, because in the greatest points we do agree already; and in the smaller we can bear with each other, and speak what we apprehend to be the truth in love. Let us bless God for this, and press on to the mark. It cannot be long before we shall be quite of one mind; before the veil of flesh shall drop off, and we shall both see pure light, in the unclouded face of God.

LETTER X.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

REVEREND SIR,

Hell was made by God, to be threatened to, and inflicted on, impenitent sinners: the preacher was therefore ridiculously delicate, who minced the name to them that *would not repent.* To such persons, I would have hell and damnation set forth in the broadest manner. But if the Pope threaten damnation to all who believe not his infallibility; or Mr. Whitefield, to all who own not his election and reprobation; or Mr. Wesley, to all who deny that he is an inspired and a miracle-working prophet; then such untimely brandishing hellfire becomes ridiculous, fit only for the terror of vapoured women, but the pity and reproof of men of sense.

2. Heaven and hell are far from being offensive to my ears; I never desire to have either of them out of my thoughts. But I should blush at threatening you with hell, for your differing from me in speculations; nay, though your speculations were certainly false, and led to

practice certainly wrong; we will say to a *deviation from established order:* for this may possibly be neither wilful nor sinful, and therefore, no way connected with eternal awards. If you really (whether truly or falsely) believe yourself to have a call to the apostolate of *England*, I question not but God's mercy may both forgive and reward the irregular pains you take, *between London and Berwick, and between Deal and the Land's-end.*

3. And yet such deviation, how innocent soever in you, may still be very wrong and hurtful in itself, it may open a door to much disorder and error; *Wild-bores, Smiths, or Moors*, will enter at the breach. The man I saw, called himself *Williams*, but whether this was another man, or another *alias*, I know not. But government once dissolved, you need not look for preachers of heresy; witness one George Whitefield, whose doctrine you treat as heretical and blasphemous.

4. I wish to God, with you, that all the clergy throughout the land were zealous for inward solid virtue; but that all of any large body should be so, is rather to be wished than expected: the greater part, as I told you, with whom I am acquainted are so. I am sorry your acquaintance is so much worse that you cannot answer for one in ten. As to complaints of immoral clergymen, they are best made to the bishop of the diocess. If you will be so public spirited as to present them; if instead of censuring the heap, you will thus contribute to the winnowing the chaff from the wheat, I dare say you will have the thanks of the bishops, and of all good men, both clergy and laity.

5. There is a sense in which novelty awakens and amends; and there is a sense in which God is the doer of all things, for whatsoever is done in the earth he doeth it himself. If your new doctrine, (or, not to differ about phrases,) if God's blessing on your new doctrine has amended some, on whom your father and yourself, whilst you preached the old doctrine, spent your strength in vain; this is no proof of the superior truth, or of God's approbation of your novelties; or that your father, who died unenlightened by them, is gone to hell; or that his exerted strength did not contribute towards sending others to heaven; it only shows that novelty, which has a natural tendency to awakening, may when God pleases, have an efficacious tendency to amending. The new act of parliament against swearing made a convert, who had been long deaf to sermons and Scripture: yet you will not say that an act of parliament is a better thing than the word of God, though in this instance attended with *his influence and blessing.*

6. I think you will not deny so plain a matter of fact, as that God's influence and blessing accompanies the ministry of many who are utter

strangers to your new notions of inspiration, which can no more be supported by the eighth of Romans than by the first of Genesis, notwithstanding all your pains to distort that text: for any thing which has yet been said to the contrary, it may be understood of the Spirit's witness by miracles, by prophecy, or by the gently and imperceptibly wrought assurances of the Holy Ghost. But what proof is this of those divine illapses and sensible communications, maintained honestly by the Quakers *always*, and more amazingly by you *only sometimes?* Sometimes you claim them in as strong terms as they do, though at other times you are disposed to distinguish them away. Your wriggling on this head, and on the plainness wherewith justification is notified, obliges me to call you back to order.

It is notorious that the Methodist writings abound with intimations of divine communications, prophetic whispers, and special guidances: it is as notorious that they teach the notification of justification to be as perceptible as the sun at noonday, and as distinct as our Saviour's notification, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.' But the instances produced in support of these high claims, instead of supporting utterly subvert them. Thus H. R. had her justification notified, and yet she denied that her sins were forgiven, and continued almost in despair above a year afterwards. Now either this notification was not so distinct as is pretended; or, if distinct, was notified by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe; or else if it was both distinct and credible, she was not of sound understanding if she disbelieved it; nor of sound memory if she immediately doubted or denied that she had ever received such a message. Could she possibly deny a plain matter of fact?—Yes, in process of time she might, particularly if she drew back to perdition; that is, in a long time people may forget or deny facts, especially if they grow wicked and are given to lying. But what is this evasive answer to the case of H. R., who lived no length of time, and never did draw back to perdition? After the time that she is said to have had *certain justification*, she lived a blameless and holy life, only terrified almost to death for fear that her sins were not remitted; when she apprehended they were she died in raptures, declaring she *was in very great pain*, but that she did not *feel any*.

8. Now, sir, do you think that such ordinary instances can in anywise support such extraordinary pretences? And after having assumed the language of an inspired prophet, and claimed the attestation of miracles, of casting out devils, and having seen many other miraculous things; when you are called upon to specify, will you think it sufficient to refer to the *one great standing miracle* of making many converts? I do not know that Origen or St. Chrysostom pretended to any such thing; it would have been impertinent therefore to have demand-

ed it of them, especially in support of a thing so probable as that they loved God. But had they demanded belief to something highly improbable, or claimed to themselves miraculous attestation; in either of these cases there had been nothing so extravagant in the demand. If prophetic intimations were vouchsafed them, after external miracles were ceased, such intimations might be rules of action to yourselves, but could be none at all to other men, any farther than as they credited the claimant. Prophet indeed, a miracle working prophet, like St. Paul, had a right to a more implicit kind of belief: neither can I help thinking, that Paul, even in that infantine state of Christianity, and with all his thorns and infirmities about him, might more reasonably be looked upon as an inspired prophet, than Mr. Wesley in his newly matured state of Christianity, though arrived in his own imagination to a sinless perfection.

9. You have much to say against the demand of miracles in proof of doctrines. I make no such demand. I demand them as things to which you lay claim; nay, in truth, I demand them no otherwise than as the prophet required idols to do good or to do evil; which was no more than a manner of asserting that they had no such power. All that I (properly speaking) demand is, that you should revoke your *ampullas et ses quipedalia verba*,* and ingenuously acknowledge that your expressions were too strong.

10. Had St. Bernard, after having talked throughout his voluminous works in the style of a miracle working prophet, intrenched himself at last in the *standing miracle of making many converts, and in the holiness of his life*; I should have thought he might have been answered in this manner: "You have hitherto always claimed much more, but still you claim too much; for to make converts (even true converts to a sober, righteous, and godly life) is no miracle at all; much less to make converts to popery, to the belief of such incredible proofless stuff as transubstantiation, and to the consequent idolatrous practice. Then as to holiness of life, no one but the Great Searcher of hearts can say what is true holiness. The popish severities of flesh-fastings, celibacies, and other monkeries, may pass for such with weak men, and draw many followers; and yet may imply no true holiness at all: nay, you may found nunneries for unholy and wicked purposes: abbesses and matrons may discipline their bands, and close bands for the uses of the fraternity, and the grossest wickedness may be carrying on under the cloak of hypocrisy."

11. God forbid that there should be any thing like this among the Methodists; though, to speak freely, I have been assured that there

* "Your bombastic expressions and lengthy words."

are very pregnant proofs about to be produced of very shocking things. I shall believe nothing without proofs. And in the mean time charitably hope that neither of us maintain any principles or practices which may bar us from seeing the unclouded face of God.

August 21, 1747.

LETTER XI.

To Mr. John Smith

SIR, *Dublin, March* 23, 1747—8.

I rejoice to find that in some points we come nearer each other, and that we can bear with each other where we do not. I entirely agree, that hell was designed only for stubborn impenitent sinners, and consequently that it would be absurd to "threaten damnation to any, merely for differing from me in speculations." But it is an absurdity which I have nothing to do with: for it never yet entered into my thoughts.

2. I rejoice likewise in your allowing that my "speculations, though false, yea and leading *to a deviation from order*, may yet possibly be neither wilful nor sinful:" and much more in that which follows, "I question not but God's mercy may both forgive and reward" even that zeal which is not according to knowledge.

3. Yet "such deviation," you think, "may open a door to much disorder and error." I grant *it may*: but I still insist, 1. that *accidental* ill consequences may flow from a good thing; 2. that the good consequences in the present case overbalance the evil, beyond all degrees of comparison. The same I believe of Mr. Whitefield's *public preaching*, which was not the *consequence*, but the (*cause* of mine,) whose doctrine in general (though he is mistaken in some points) I believe to be the truth of the gospel.

4. I never did censure the *whole body* of clergy, and God forbid that I ever should. I do not willingly censure any, even the grossly immoral. But you advise to "complain of those to the bishop of the diocess." In what way? "Be so public-spirited as to *present* them." Much may be said on that question. I should ask, 1. Have I a right to present them? I apprehend not. The churchwardens of each parish are to do this: which they will hardly do at my instance. 2. If I could do it myself, the presenting them to the *court* is not presenting them to the bishop: the bishop you cannot but know has no more authority in what is called the bishop's court, than the Pope of *Rome*. 3. I cannot present, suppose thirty persons, in as many counties,

to the *lay-chancellors* or *officials*, (men whom I apprehend to have just as much authority from Scripture to administer the sacraments, as to try ecclesiastical causes,) without such an expense both of labour, and money, and time, as I am by no means able to sustain. And what would be the fruit, if I could sustain it? if I was the informer-general against the immoral clergy of England? O sir, can you imagine, or "dare you say, that I should have the thanks of the bishops, and of all good men, both clergy and laity?" If you allow only those to be good men who would thank me for this, I fear you would not find *seven thousand* good men in all our Israel.

5. But you have been "assured there are proofs about to be produced of very shocking things among *us* also." It is very possible you may. And to say the truth, I expected such things long ago. In such a body of people must there not be some hypocrites? And some who did for a time serve God in sincerity, and yet afterwards turn back from the holy commandment once delivered to them? I am amazed there have been so few instances of this, and look for more every day. The melancholy case of that unhappy man, Mr. Hall, I do not rank among these. For he had renounced us long ago, and that over and over, both by word and writing. And though he called upon me once or twice a year, and lately made some little overtures of friendship, yet I have it under his own hand, "He could have no fellowship with us, because we would not leave the Church." But "*quia intellexi minus, protrusit foras.*"* To make it quite plain and clear how close a connexion there was between him and me, when I lately called on his poor wife at Salisbury, he fairly turned me out of doors, and my sister after me.

6. My father did not die unacquainted with the faith of the gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first reformers: the same which, by the grace of God, I preach, and which is just as new as Christianity. What he experienced before I know not; but I know that during his last illness, which continued eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although at the time I understood him not. "The inward witness, son, the inward witness," said he to me, "that is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity." And when I asked him, (the time of his change drawing nigh,) "Sir, are you in much pain?" He answered aloud, with a smile, "God does chasten me with pain, yea, all my bones with strong pain. But I thank him for all, I bless him for all, I love him for all!" I think the last words he spoke, when I had just commended his soul to God, were, "Now you have

* "But because I seemed reluctant to entertain his views, he expelled me from his dwelling."

done all." And with the same serene, cheerful countenance he fell asleep, without one struggle, or sigh, or groan. I cannot therefore doubt but the Spirit of God bore an inward witness with his spirit, that he was a child of God.

7. That "God blesses a doctrine preached (new or old) to the saving of souls from death, does not prove that every circumstance of it is true; for a predestinarian preacher may save souls." But it undoubtedly proves, that the *main* of what is preached is the truth as it is in Jesus. For it is only the gospel of Jesus Christ which is the power of God unto salvation. Human wisdom, as human laws, may restrain from outward sin; but they cannot avail as to the saving of the soul. If God gives this blessing to what is preached, it is a sufficient "proof of his approbation." But I will not contend about words, or when his *blessing* is allowed, dispute whether it has his approbation or not.

8. But to argue on your own supposition: you say, "It only shows that novelty, which has a natural tendency to awakening, may, when God pleases, have an efficacious tendency to amending." Well, then; if the novelty of an indifferent circumstance, such as place, has a natural tendency to awakening, surely we may use it according to its natural tendency, in order to awaken those that sleep in sin! And if God has in fact been pleased to use it beyond its natural tendency, to make it efficacious for amending as well as awakening, ought we not to acquiesce, yea, and rejoice therein?

9. But are sinners amended? Are they saved from their sins? Are they truly converted to God? Here is, what always must be, the main question. That many are in *some sort* converted, is owned. But to what are they converted? "To the belief of such proofless incredible stuff as transubstantiation? or to the Popish severities of flesh-fastings, celibacies, and other monkeries?" Not so. If they are converted at all, they are converted from all manner of wickedness, "to a sober, righteous, and godly life." Such a uniform practice is true outward holiness. And wherever this is undeniably found, we ought to believe there is holiness of heart: seeing the tree is known by its fruits.

10. That "the conversion of sinners to this holiness is no miracle at all," is new doctrine indeed! So new to me, that I never heard it before, either among Protestants or Papists. I think a miracle is a work of Omnipotence, wrought by the supernatural power of God. Now, if the conversion of sinners to holiness is not such a work, I cannot tell what is. I apprehend our Lord accounts it a greater work than giving sight to the blind, yea, or raising the dead. For it was after he had raised Lazarus from the dead that he told his

apostles, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.' Greater outward works they could not do. It remains, therefore, that we understand those solemn words, of converting souls to God: which is indeed a greater work than any that can be wrought on the body.

11. I am glad you do "not demand miracles in proof of doctrines." Thus far then we are agreed. But you demand them, 1. "as things to which I lay claim;" and in order to show that claim cannot be supported, 2. as necessary to give me "a right to be implicitly believed." And, 3dly. To justify my "assuming the apostolate of England."

If this be all, your demand must soon fall to the ground, since the whole foundation sinks beneath it. For, 1st. I lay no claim (in your sense) to miracles; for the clearing of which, suffer me to refer you once more (that I may not be surfeited with *cramba decies repetita**) to the second letter to Mr. Church. 2. I claim no implicit faith: I neither pay it to, nor expect it from, any man living. 3. I no otherwise assume the apostolate of England, (if you choose to use the phrase,) than I assume the apostolate of all Europe, or rather of all the world: that is, in plain terms, wherever I see one or a thousand men running into hell, be it in *England*, *Ireland*, or *France*, yea, in *Europe*, *Asia*, *Africa*, or *America*, I will stop them if I can: as a minister of Christ, I will beseech them, in his name, to turn back and be reconciled to God. Were I to do otherwise, were I to let any soul drop into the pit when I might have saved it from everlasting burnings, I am not satisfied God would accept my plea, "Lord, he was not of my parish."

12. If a single parish takes up your whole time and care, and you spend, and are spent upon it,—well. And yet I will be bold to say, that no blessing from God will accompany your ministry, but the drunkard will be a drunkard still, (and so the covetous, the brawler, the adulterer,) unless you both believe and teach what you love to call my "new notions of inspiration." I mean, as to the substance, not the particular manner of explication: you will all the day long stretch out your hands in vain, unless you teach them to pray, that the Spirit of God may inwardly witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God. I apprehend *you* are the person that "wriggle on this head," because the argument pinches: you appear to me to twist and wind to and fro, because I "distinguish away," not my doctrines, but your objections: unravelling the fallacies, showing what part is false, and what part true, but nothing to the purpose. Since you move it again, I will resume the point once

* "Saying the same things ten times over."

more. You will pardon me if I speak home, that it may be seen which of us two it is that has hitherto given the "evasive answers."

13. You say, "Notwithstanding all your pains to distort the text, for any thing which has yet been said to the contrary, it may be understood of the Spirit's witness by miracles, by prophecy, or by the imperceptibly wrought assurances of the Holy Ghost." This (unless it gives up the whole cause, as indeed it must, if it does not imply a contradiction; seeing imperceptible assurance is no assurance at all) is neither an evasive nor unevasive answer. It is just no answer at all. Instead of refuting my arguments, you reply, "You distort the text. *Ipse dixi.*"

"The Quakers maintain divine illapses, and sensible communications *always*; you *only sometimes.*"—If you speak to the purpose, if you mean the inward witness of God's Spirit, I maintain it *always* as well as they.

"The Methodist writings abound with intimations of divine communications, prophetic whispers, and special guidance." Perhaps so; but that is another question. We are now speaking of the inward witness of the Spirit.

14. "They teach the notification of justification to be as perceptible as the sun at noonday." Now you come to the point, and I allow the charge. From the beginning of our correspondence to this day, I have, without any shifting or evasion at all, maintained flatly and plainly: 1st. A man feels the testimony of God's Spirit, and cannot then deny or doubt his being a child of God. 2. After a time that testimony is withdrawn, (not from every child of God: many retain the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.) 3. Then he may doubt, whether this testimony was of God; and perhaps at length deny that it was."

There is no shadow of contradiction between this and the case of H. R. For 1. she felt the testimony of God's Spirit, and could not deny or doubt her being a child of God. 2. After a time, this testimony was withdrawn. 3. *Then* she doubted whether it was of God. Observe: she never forgot or denied that she had such a testimony. But she then doubted whether it was of God.

But you have still more to remark upon this head. So I attend you step by step.

15. "The instances produced (it should be *instance*, for you cite but one) in support of these high claims, instead of supporting, utterly subvert them. Thus H. R. had her justification notified: and yet she denied that her sins were forgiven." You should say, she *doubted* of it, after a time, when the testimony of God's Spirit was withdrawn. "Now either this notification was not so distinct as is pretended, or,

if distinct, was notified by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe. Or if it was both distinct and credible, she was not of sound understanding, if she disbelieved it, nor of sound memory if she (*afterwards* it should be) doubted or denied that she had ever received such a message."

You say, 1. "Either that notification was not so distinct." It was so distinct, that she could not then doubt. "Or, 2. was notified to her by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe." Yes, she then believed, and knew it was the voice of God. "Or, 3. she was not of sound understanding, if she disbelieved it."—*When* she disbelieved it, she was not. For as the serpent deceived Eve, so he then deceived her, φθειρων το νοημα αυτης.

"But could she possibly deny a plain matter of fact?" You add, as if I have said so, "*Yes, in process of time, she might, particularly if she drew back to perdition:*" and then subjoin, "But what is this evasive answer to the case of H. R.?" I think, nothing at all. I never applied it to her case. She never *denied* her having had such a testimony. But after a time she *doubted*, (as I said before) whether that testimony was true.

16. I presume *Eve* in paradise was at least equal in understanding with any of her posterity. Now unto her God said, *In the day that thou eatest of the tree of knowledge, thou shalt surely die.* And doubtless "this notification was as distinct and perceptible to her, as the sun at noonday. Yet after a time (perhaps only a few days) she utterly disbelieved it."

You exclaim, Absurd! impossible! there could be no such thing: as I shall prove immediately.

"Either this notification was not so distinct as is pretended; or, if distinct, was notified by one of suspected credit, whom she could not believe. Or else, if it was both distinct and credible, she was not of sound understanding if she disbelieved it, nor of sound memory, if she doubted of it." Therefore the whole story is absurd, and a self-inconsistent (not a cunningly-devised) fable.

Is not the plain answer this? This notification was as distinct as [is] pretended. And it was not notified by one of suspected credit, whom she did not then firmly believe. But afterwards Satan deceived her by his subtilty, φθειρων το νοημα αυ῎ης, *corrupting, spoiling, destroying, the soundness of her understanding*, and of her memory too. And then she disbelieved God, and believed him who said, 'Ye shall not surely die.' How much more is he able by the same subtilty to deceive any of the fallen children of men!

17. What follows you did not design for argument, but wit. "I cannot help thinking that Paul, with all his infirmities, might more

reasonably be looked upon as an inspired prophet, than Mr. Wesley, though arrived, in his own imagination, to a sinless perfection." I never told you so, nor any one else. I no more imagine that I have already attained, that I already love God, with all my heart, soul, and strength, than that I am in the third heavens.

But you make me abundant amends for this, by your charitable belief, that though I may now imagine things that are not, and be mistaken in many points, yet he who remembers I am but dust, will at last "forgive and reward me." It is enough: the time of error and sin is short: eternity is at hand.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,
This earth, we know, is not our place,
And hasten through the vale of wo,
And restless to behold thy face,
Swift to our heavenly country move,
Our everlasting Home above.

END OF THE LETTERS BETWEEN THE REV. * * * *

Who passes under the Name of John Smith,

AND THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

I HAVE given this controversy in full to the serious reader, not adding or omitting one word; and I shall conclude with observing, that MR. JOHN SMITH, so called, retired from the contest, despairing of being able to induce Mr. Wesley, either to give up "THE APOSTOLATE OF ENGLAND," or to come back to the doctrine of "imperceptible" *justification* and *sanctification*, under which he had so long groaned, and from which he had in vain expected those *fruits*, and affections of the HOLY SPIRIT, *love, joy, and peace;* accompanied with *a hope full of immortality:* even that *rest* which CHRIST *gives to those who come to him weary and heavy laden.*

Concerning the *design* of this eminent controversialist, we can draw no certain conclusion. It may be inferred, however, with much probability, that if Mr. Wesley had yielded to his dignified opponent, and returned to the rational system, so called, which was so strongly pressed upon him, JOHN SMITH would

have been his *friend.* It does not seem probable, that such pains would have been taken with such a man, through a mere love of disputation, or a desire of victory. A way seemed, therefore, opened to Mr. Wesley to return to honour and repose, at that very period of his life and labours, when nothing appeared before him but danger, and incessant labour and suffering. This trial, therefore, seems, in some respects, similar to that which is recorded of the *patriarchs,* (Heb. xi, 15)—*And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore* GOD *is not ashamed to be called their* GOD; *for he hath prepared for them a city.* This was *the trial of their faith. They were not disobedient to the heavenly calling.—They went out, not knowing whither they went;* neither would they accept *the opportunities of returning,* which their pilgrimage afforded, by the special providence of HIM who has always tried his servants. Mr. Wesley had *bought the truth,* and he *would not sell it. He,* also, *endured as seeing* HIM *that is invisible;* hence we see the propriety of the STANZA with which he concludes his last letter.

He therefore held on his way for forty-four years after the conclusion of this controversy; *through honour and through dishonour, through evil report and good report; as a deceiver, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as chastened, and not killed; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things!*

And may we not hope, respecting his opponent, that a man of so much piety, of such rare endowments, so strong an understanding, and of so amiable a spirit;—a man who seemed to want nothing, but what Mr. Wesley himself wanted only a few years before—THE TRUE AND LIVING FAITH OF THE GOSPEL, did not lose the benefit of such an investigation of its truths? We may well hope it.—The retirement and sober thought, which increasing years impose on men, even of the highest station, may have brought him (as many have been brought) to attend to those teachings and reproofs of the HOLY SPIRIT, whose great office it is to *convince the world of sin,* (however specious its profession,) unto to that *poverty of spirit,* that *sense* of our true condition in the sight of God; that *feeling* of wretchedness, which alone can, in truth, extort the cry, *O*

wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? This cry was never refused at *the Throne of Grace.* Thus *believing with the heart,* and pleading *the only name, the God who bought him,*—THE FAITH, which is eminently *the gift of God,* would not be refused. The *Holy Spirit would thus glorify the Son,* and the sinner becoming *an adopted child of God,* and *walking by faith,* would be enabled to *give up his soul with joy into the hands of his merciful and faithful Creator.*

FINIS.